olin Powell cozies up to Iraq LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Frank Kermode on Scribbling

Alan Wolfe on Belonging

RCH 26, 2001

THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN STOP BUSH

Tom Daschle and the struggle to save the Democrats.

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Marginal utility

TO THE EDITORS:

Gregg Easterbrook's article on the California power crisis ("Brown and Out," February 19) is the definition of a cheap shot. His main assertion is that the crisis resulted from utility managers' ineptitude; yet his article demonstrates how many other forces and agendas were at work to produce the current situation, most notably the surrealistic California-style deregulation imposed on utilities by the legislature. I watched the process unfold; in many cases the utilities defended themselves as best they could against unworkable measures, having no choice but to go along with the politicians and the public to whom those politicians played.

Easterbrook mistakenly asserts that the utilities had "guaranteed profits" under regulation. Nothing could be further from the truth. Their profit ceiling was established, but how much profit (or loss) they incurred always depended on the dedication and hard work of people who made the companies run and run well. The plain truth is that the U.S. power industry was not broken until the deregulation lobby took a notion to "fix" it. America has had amazingly reliable power generation for decades thanks to the efforts of the people Easterbrook so cavalierly disparages.

MICHAEL ARROWOOD
Zirconia, North Carolina

TO THE EDITORS:

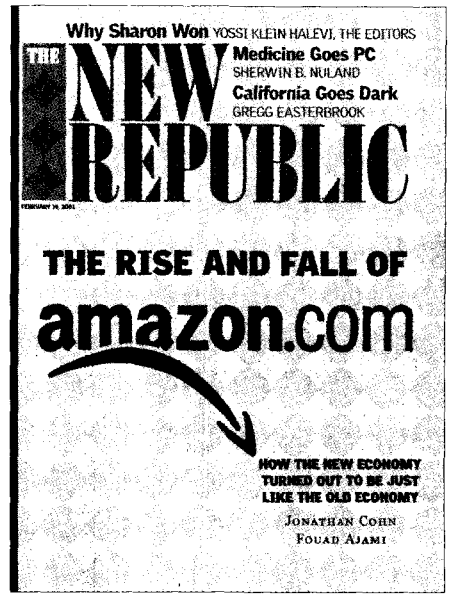
I would like to commend Gregg Easterbrook for his lucid explanation of how California got into its current electricity mess. Having worked at Southern California Edison during the period chronicled by Easterbrook's article, I can attest that in its early days virtually everyone at the utility's corporate office, from its top executives on down, was oblivious to the downside of California-style deregulation. As the money rolled in from the sales of SoCal Edison's fossil-fuel power plants and we spun the public a happy story of what a great deal deregulation was for everybody involved, we at the utility best resembled a frog that sits placidly in a pot of warming water, unaware that it's about to be boiled to death. Easterbrook has nailed this story better than any other journalist to date.

STEVE SHENDER
Aptos, California

Botched

TO THE EDITORS:

Perhaps the editors, who proclaim that Israelis have chosen a "return to a sturdier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sort of Israeli vigilance," forgot that 20 percent of these Israelis are Arabs ("Landslide," February 19). The Arabs voted en masse for Ehud Barak in 1999 because he promised to end the discrimination to which they have been subject since 1948. Barak did not keep his promises, and his government was responsible for killing 13 Arab demonstrators last October. Only 25 percent of Arabs voted in the recent elections. Obviously, Ariel Sharon's victory would not have been a "landslide" had they voted as they did in 1999. Do the editors contend that the Arabs also believed Barak's way was bankrupt "because it had no counterpart on the other side"?

Many Jewish Israelis also boycotted the elections. Their reasons had nothing to do with Barak's "magnanimous offer" to the Palestinians. They had everything to do with his mistreatment of the Arabs, his neglect of social problems, his sycophantic attitude toward the ultra-Orthodox, and his botching of the peace process.

Only 62 percent of the electorate—the lowest percentage ever—bothered to vote. The reasons for Barak's defeat go deeper than Israeli "skepticism" toward peace. I therefore suggest that, instead of telling Israelis why we elected Sharon, the editors speak for themselves.

MOSHE TEMKIN
New York, New York

Misconceived

TO THE EDITORS:

In her review of Graham Stewart's book *Burying Caesar: The Churchill-Chamberlain Rivalry*, Laura Beers twice refers to Winston Churchill as his father's youngest son ("The Battle of Britain," February 19). He was, in fact, the elder of

continued on page 41

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Peter Beinart

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Profit of Doom?

LET'S SEE IF I can paraphrase the current consensus about drug companies and AIDS in Africa. Oh, why bother when I can simply quote Anthony Lewis? Here he is:

> In the United States and Europe, the anti-retroviral drugs that have made AIDS a containable disease for many sufferers cost either the patient or the society $10,000 to $15,000 a year. It has been widely assumed that poorer countries cannot afford them, and in any event do not have health systems that could use them effectively.... [Tina Rosenberg in *The New York Times Magazine*] showed that those assumptions are false. Brazil now makes the drugs itself and has cut the cost by nearly 80 percent; government commitment has produced clinics to supervise the treatment effectively. Many lives, and much money, have been saved. The big drug companies are frantically resisting the precedent. And they have great lobbying power in the United States, achieved by campaign donations.

Voilà! AIDS in the developing world, described by Lewis as "the most profound and immediate threat to life on earth," is easily solved. Only the evil drug companies, abetted by evil Republicans, stand in the way—companies whose only argument is their ability to buy politicians using campaign cash. The only problem with this line of thought is that the drug companies, not all of which are "big," actually do have an argument, and the closer you look, the stronger it is.

Start with a simple question: Ever wonder how we have drugs to treat HIV in the first place? Lewis doesn't address this, but those of us who are alive today because of those drugs have had reason to figure it out. You could argue that anti-AIDS drugs are the gift to the world of legions of brilliant scientists and researchers. But that misses the point. The reason we have a treatment for HIV is not the angelic brilliance of anyone per se but the free-market system that rewards serious research with serious money. Ever wonder why the vast majority of such treatments come from U.S.-based companies? Because European pharmaceutical companies have been clobbered by socialized medicine and have moved much of their research and production to the United States. (Ten years ago, half of the ten top-selling drugs in the world were made by European companies. After a decade of price controls and regulation, Europeans now make only three of the top 25.) Ever wonder why Indian scientists are working in U.S.-based labs rather than in India? Because our free-market system gives them incentives to discover rather than reasons to flee. The knockoff companies in India and Brazil so beloved by the left are at best copiers of American products and at worst thieves. They're the Napsters of the drug world—only worse, because they charge for what they steal rather than give it away for free.

So the hard question is: How do we maintain the system that gave us these drugs in the first place while getting them to the largest number of infected people? It seems to me that the recent offer by Merck to sell key anti-retrovirals at one-tenth their Western price is an admirable, if partial, answer. HIV, after all, is not like cancer. It is an epidemic, spreading exponentially across the globe. Waiting for patents to run out and prices to drop in the natural course of events is a death sentence for a generation or more. As long as the domestic markets remain unmolested by populists and regulators, a massive discount from the major pharmaceutical companies for poor countries overseas is actually a stunningly generous gesture. Drug companies, after all, are not designed to cure diseases or please op-ed columnists. They're designed to satisfy shareholders. At least that was the shareholders' assumption when they invested.

What if the drugs are still too expensive? Well, that's where governments and international organizations come in. If we wanted to, we could go a long way toward funding discounted HIV meds for the developing world from Western taxpayers' pockets. In saved lives and rescued economies, it would pay for itself. Besides, in times like this it's simply the right thing to do. But such aid should come with realistic caveats. It's vital to ensure that these meds are taken in the right amounts at the right times—or else they will be ineffective in the patient and generate incurable viral strains in the process. Believe me, ensuring this is harder than it sounds. For almost eight years now I've juggled more than 30 pills a day—with food, without food, at night, in the morning, and on and on. Every year or so the regimen changes. I have more than ten prescriptions to keep track of. Most of the time, you feel sick and exhausted after a dose—a subtle but deep incentive to put off taking it, forget, or just give up. I'm not whining, I'm just making a point. Even with educated, motivated patients, 80 percent adherence is an achievement—and 80 percent still means new drug-resistant viral strains gain a niche in the population at large.

Now think of the consequences of doling out hundreds of pills to people who can barely afford a decent meal or a regular trip to the doctor. Keeping track of the drugs will be hard enough. If Western food aid results in massive theft, corruption, and reexportation, can you imagine what Africa's kleptomaniac dictators could do with expensive HIV meds? Sure, Brazil has shown that drugs can be successfully administered in controlled circumstances. But Brazil is currently an exception to the rule. Elsewhere our best bet is modest, controlled treatment centers where anti-HIV drugs are delivered with medical monitoring and advice. If these work, let's expand them.

For those without access to these drugs, we can also do a lot, and quite cheaply. For people with AIDS there are plenty of relatively inexpensive post-patent drugs with simple dosings to treat the opportunistic infections that prey on depressed immune systems. This can relieve at least some of the pain and suffering, even if it cannot solve the underlying problem.

This means, tragically, that most people with HIV right now will die of it. That is an appalling prospect—as appalling as the thousands who die of dysentery for lack of clean drinking water or who are killed in war, lost in childbirth, or ravaged by malaria. In the face of this, there is the duty to do all we possibly can. But there's also an imperative not to engage in rituals of easy blame, or to attempt something that cannot realistically be achieved, or to demonize those who are a critical part of the solution. In the current debate, it's worth remembering one simple thing: Most African and Western governments have done virtually nothing to halt this global epidemic and are still balking at major aid. The American private sector, which has been responsible for the lion's share of HIV research, is now offering to pay for 90 percent of the cost of drugs for the developing world at the expense of future profits and research. Now you tell me who the real villains are.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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Trigger Lock

AMONG THE POLITICAL class's more frustrating notions is that you can substitute procedural fixes for difficult policy judgments. Think incumbents get reelected too easily? Term-limit them to get rid of the good and bad alike. Don't trust lawmakers not to spend more than they can afford? Pass a balanced-budget amendment and tie their hands. And now the tax cut "trigger." The Senate, which will decide whether President Bush's tax cut lives or dies, is faced with once-in-a-generation decisions about the distribution of wealth and the size and shape of government. Yet, rather than grapple with them, a crucial bloc of moderates is deflecting attention with a mechanistic quick fix: a tax cut trigger. The trigger reflects the well-intentioned hope that a binding set of rules, properly written, can safeguard against the adverse consequences of a potentially irresponsible tax cut. It can't.

The argument for a trigger begins with a logical observation: Since ten-year budget-surplus projections are unreliable, allocating all that money to a tax cut now risks creating deficits if the anticipated surpluses fail to materialize. So far, so good. The rational solution to this quandary, of course, is to pass a smaller tax cut now and, if the surpluses continue to grow, cut taxes again in a few years. But the eleven senators behind the trigger proposal—six Democrats, five Republicans—think they have a better solution: Pass a tax cut (the Republicans prefer Bush's, the Democrats favor a safer alternative) but include a "trigger" that conditions its implementation on the surpluses. If, in a given year, the expected surpluses didn't show up, the trigger would halt the next year's phase-in until things got back on track. If the surpluses never showed up, presumably the trigger would halt subsequent tax cut phase-ins altogether.

Of course, with or without a trigger, future Congresses are perfectly capable of halting tax cuts—or even raising taxes—on their own. But that would require difficult and presumably unpopular political decisions on their part, something the trigger proponents aren't sure they'll have the will to do. "I've never seen Congress impose unilaterally self-discipline," says trigger-boosting Senator Olympia Snowe of Maine. A trigger, by contrast, would force future lawmakers to make responsible decisions whether they wanted to or not.

Or that's the theory. In 1985 Congress tried a similar device to force itself to reduce the deficit. The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings law required Congress to chop the deficit to progressively lower levels every year, or else across-the-board spending cuts would kick in automatically. But year after year Congress missed the targets by widening margins, until the whole thing became a laughingstock. Gramm-Rudman failed for the same reasons a tax cut trigger will fail: The president and Congress have all sorts of ways to cook the numbers to prevent the trigger from going off. They can jigger the way Treasury handles its finances, push spending programs into the next fiscal year, or utilize any number of other byzantine accounting devices at their disposal to make the numbers seem to add up.

If anything, a tax trigger would work *less* effectively than Gramm-Rudman, because it suffers from a basic design dilemma. It should never actually raise tax rates. This is because the trigger is most likely to kick in when an economic slowdown diminishes a surplus, and raising taxes at such a moment could throw the economy into full recession. Consequently, the trigger proposal currently under discussion postpones only stages of the tax cut that have yet to be implemented. But four-fifths of Bush's cut would be in place within the next five years. If the surplus began drying up after that—if the productivity increases of the new economy turn out to be temporary, or medical costs shoot up again, or the United States goes to war—the trigger would be largely useless. The horses would already have left the barn.

In the end, a tax cut trigger's primary function is to give senators a rationale for supporting a larger tax cut than would otherwise seem responsible. Snowe practically admitted as much last Sunday on "Face the Nation." "I do think this is the way we can build support for the president's $1.6 trillion tax cut," she declared.

Before the trigger proposal was floated, senators faced a straightforward and momentous political decision: Gamble the country's fiscal health on a large tax cut that would drastically limit future spending and might lead to deficits, or support more modest tax reforms that we almost certainly can afford. Whether they like it or not, they still do. ■

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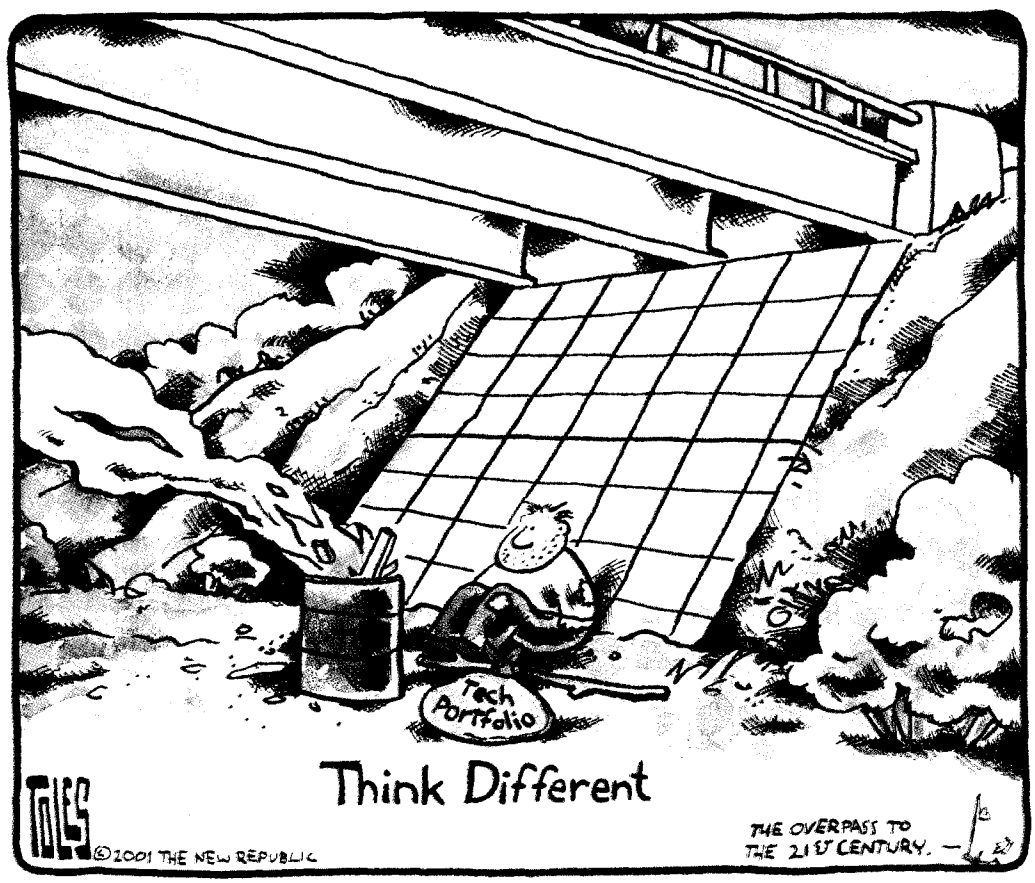
NOTEBOOK

BANKRUPT: Of the various, often conflicting arguments President Bush has marshaled for his tax cut, perhaps the most disingenuous is his recent insistence that it will help Americans pay off their credit card debt. In a speech this week in Panama City, Florida, Bush argued that "[t]here is debt at the federal level, and we do a good job of paying down a lot. But there is also consumer debt, credit card debt, debt that burdens the working people." As we've noted before, this logic directly contradicts the more common White House line that a tax cut will prevent a recession—as every dollar used to pay off credit card debt is one not used to stimulate the economy. But there's an even deeper hypocrisy: At the same time Bush is pledging to rescue Americans from their crushing credit card debt, he's pushing through Congress a bill that will do just the opposite. The bankruptcy legislation now sailing through the Republican Congress with White House support makes it harder for consumers saddled with debt to get a fresh start under Chapter 7 bankruptcy protection. If the bill passes, even responsible consumers forced into bankruptcy by unforeseen illness or unemployment would find it all but impossible to wipe away their debt in bankruptcy court. One of the bill's biggest backers is MBNA, the credit card giant that spends millions each year enticing consumers with high-interest cards. It was also the single largest donor to Bush's presidential campaign. Talk about paying back your debts.

CIVIL WAR: At the start of last week's bipartisan House "civility retreat," Minority Leader Richard Gephardt struck a discordant note, accusing House Speaker Dennis Hastert and the Republican leadership of "running roughshod" over the Democrats. His comments came on the heels of a congressional session in which the relationship between the two leaders had eroded to the point that they finally refused to speak to each another. The 106th Congress had, after all, opened in the wake of impeachment, the most divisive congressional event in decades. Add to that the Republicans' tenuous hold on the majority—which emboldened Democrats to back up their institutional and legislative demands with threats of boycotts, inaction, and provocative measures such as petitions to discharge bills from committees—and you get a picture that looks like ... incivility. But not according to the Annenberg Public Policy Center. The group, which issues a report every two years on civility in the House, has just found that the last Congress was the most civil of the eight it has studied, going back to 1985. How did the study's authors reach this counterintuitive conclusion? By searching the Congressional Record to determine how often terms such as "name calling" and "aspersions" were used on the House floor—the more frequent their occurrence, the lower the civility. It would seem, then, that the most civil Congress is one in which the floor sees little or no action because legislation is tied up in bitter infighting and committee quarrels—which is exactly what happened during the 106th Congress. And they say political science is in decline.

SUMMERS SCHOOL: The Puritan Cotton Mather, perhaps the most learned American of his time, was passed over twice for the presidency of Harvard. The two men Harvard offered it to in his stead wisely declined. And the man who finally accepted it, the Reverend Benjamin Wadsworth, turned out to be a cipher. In other words, choosing bad presidents is one of Harvard's most venerable traditions. But last week, when the Fellows of Harvard College chose Lawrence Summers as the university's twenty-seventh president, they broke with history. They didn't really have any choice. Though the search came down to three candidates, Summers's intellectual credentials were so commanding that



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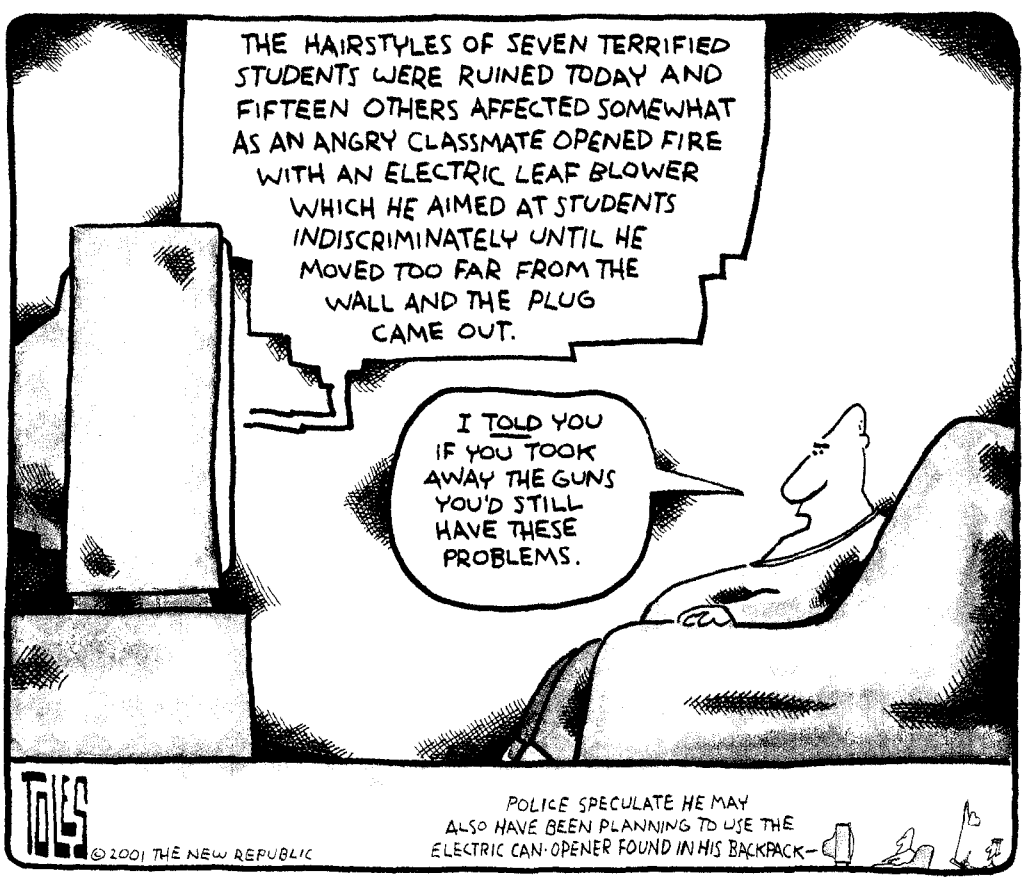
choosing one of his competitors would have been a scandal. And Summers's intellectual credentials are more than simply academic. Granted tenure at 28, awarded the coveted John Bates Clarke Medal in Economics at 38, appointed secretary of the treasury at 44—to find a thinker who combines such theoretical sophistication with such practical experience in government and the economy one has to go back to Jean Monnet and John Maynard Keynes, very serious comparisons indeed. And Summers doesn't only have ideas about economics; he has ideas about education. He seems to grasp that a university's core is still its college. In this he resembles the classicist Charles W. Eliot, who became Harvard's president in 1869 and dragged the institution into the twentieth century—improving the faculty, establishing stricter and more meritocratic admissions standards, and improving the graduate schools, especially in the sciences. But perhaps the best comparison of all is to James Bryant Conant, the professor of organic chemistry who became president in 1933. As the United States was dragged into World War II, Franklin Roosevelt appointed Conant chairman of the National Defense Research Committee, which coordinated the scientific efforts underpinning the country's war with the Axis powers. Upon returning to the university presidency in 1946, Conant began the reform of the curriculum ultimately known as "general education," which became America's most influential model of a college canon. Conant left Harvard in 1953, when Dwight Eisenhower appointed him U.S. high commissioner in Germany. When Conant spoke, people listened, as they haven't listened since, certainly not to the glorified fund-raiser who has held the job for the past ten years. Last week, in a single act, the Harvard Corporation may have reversed decades of public indifference to what the country's educational leadership says. No wonder there was on the Cambridge campus these last few days, and especially among undergraduates, a sense of relief and of élan.

BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY: A *Wall Street Journal* editorial this week condemns former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin for having the temerity to suggest that reducing the national debt should come before tax cuts. First the editorial repeats the *Journal*'s tendentious argument that paying down the debt will force the government to fork over exorbitant premiums to those who hold government bonds. But this time it adds an unseemly wrinkle: Observing that many of those bondholders are foreigners, it continues, "Of those foreigners, 27% are Japanese, including some very large banks. Investors from Communist China and OPEC nations hold another 4% each. No doubt these folks will appreciate the subsidy that Mr. Rubin wants middle-class Americans to pay them to give up their T-bonds early. *Arigato, Rubin-san!*" As staunch free-traders, the *Journal*'s editors normally have little use for such Buchananesque nativism (let alone hostility toward "very large banks"). But normally America isn't on the verge of blowing its surplus on a tax cut for the wealthy. Desperate times call for desperate measures.


THE HAIRSTYLES OF SEVEN TERRIFIED STUDENTS WERE RUINED TODAY AND FIFTEEN OTHERS AFFECTED SOMEWHAT AS AN ANGRY CLASSMATE OPENED FIRE WITH AN ELECTRIC LEAF BLOWER WHICH HE AIMED AT STUDENTS INDISCRIMINATELY UNTIL HE MOVED TOO FAR FROM THE WALL AND THE PLUG CAME OUT.
I TOLD YOU IF YOU TOOK AWAY THE GUNS YOU'D STILL HAVE THESE PROBLEMS.
TOLES
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POLICE SPECULATE HE MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN PLANNING TO USE THE ELECTRIC CAN-OPENER FOUND IN HIS BACKPACK—

AND JOHN WILKES BOOTH WAS AIMING AT THE PRESIDENTIAL BOX: "A picture caption ... [of] Prof. Edward Said ... throwing a stone, misstated his target. He was aiming toward an Israeli guardhouse at the Lebanese border, not at Israeli soldiers."—*The New York Times*, March 13

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: In "False Positive" (March 19), a quote in the first paragraph was incorrectly attributed to North Dakota Senator Byron Dorgan, a Democrat and former state tax commissioner. The author of the quote is Dorgan's colleague Senator Kent Conrad, also a North Dakota Democrat and former state tax commissioner. ■

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White House Watch

Root Cause

By Ryan Lizza

FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA

PRESIDENT BUSH'S STOP in Fargo starts with a joke. An emcee warming up the 8,000 people packed into North Dakota State University's Bison Arena tells a story about a priest who encounters a bear in the woods. The bear gets up on his hind legs, ready to maul the priest and eat him. The priest, terrified, falls to the ground, looks to heaven, and recites the Lord's Prayer. "The bear looks at him," the emcee says, "looks down, drops to his knees, makes the sign of the cross, puts his claws together, and says, 'Bless us, O lord, for these thy gifts.'" After a painfully long silence, the emcee moves on: "The Catholics always seem to get that one a little quicker than everybody else. OK, let's go back to our country band, The Great Outdoors!"

As the band plays, people continue to stream inside. Hundreds more are turned away because the arena is full. Additional Bush supporters line his motorcade route or go next door to the Fargodome, host to "Construction Expo 2001," which seems to have merged with the Bush event. Atop a giant crane featured at the expo hangs a banner declaring BUSH ROCKS. Inside the Bison Arena, Bush's people have passed out tiny American flags and big blue signs that say TAX RELIEF NOW! A giant banner at one end of the arena carries the same message. A few minutes before Bush arrives, four burly Dakotans stand up, rip off their T-shirts, and flex their biceps. Their bare chests spell out B-U-S-H in black letters. The crowd goes wild.

Welcome to George W. Bush's permanent campaign. So far, in the first half of his first 100 days, Bush has attended campaign-style events like this one in over a dozen states, more than Bill Clinton, George H.W. Bush, or Ronald Reagan did in comparable periods. In fact, he's spent one out of every three days on the road, which means it's not all that surprising that, as *The New York Times* reported last weekend, he spent only five hours working on his budget; he's too busy selling it. His targets are "red-zone Democrats," Democratic senators who represent states Bush carried in November (which formed a sea of red on electoral maps). If Bush's road trips over the last two months seem strikingly similar to his road trips during the 18 months before November 7, it's because they are. Then, as now, Bush spoke against a backdrop of typical Americans and a giant American flag. There is a tax family at every stop for the local media to cover (David and Michelle Wightman made Fox's Fargo affiliate). Bush's stump speech hasn't changed much since he entered the White House. Sometimes he even slips into the future-oriented verb tenses of the campaign, like when he announced in Lafayette, Louisiana, that he was "going to" bring new leadership to Washington.

There are differences, of course. Bush's lectern now sports a presidential seal, and instead of asking people for their vote Bush asks them to "e-mail some of the good folks from the United States Senate." But, traveling with Bush on a three-state swing through North Dakota, South Dakota, and Louisiana last week (home to a total of six red-zone Democrats), there was little doubt that this White House has adopted the presidential style Clinton perfected: the permanent campaign, a seamless marriage of electioneering and governance. As the Brookings Institution's Thomas Mann, who recently co-edited the book *The Permanent Campaign and Its Future*, notes, "If ever a president has learned from his predecessor, it's George W. Bush. He is governing by campaigning."

IT WASN'T SUPPOSED to be this way. During the campaign, Bush and his surrogates railed against the Clinton administration for turning the White House into an arm of the Democratic National Committee. Bush made the topic a theme of his convention speech, attacking Democrats for their "war room" mentality. Bush allies hammered it as well. A month before Bush took office, Representative Rob Portman, a close adviser to the president, told *The New York Times*, "People have talked about the Clinton-Gore administration as a permanent campaign. That's not going to happen with George Bush." During the transition, Bush press secretary Ari Fleischer spent the better part of one of his daily briefings condemning opponents of Attorney General John Ashcroft's nomination for "carrying campaign-style tactics into a thoughtful process." Fleischer explained, "What's disappointing is when people make campaigns arms of government.... The campaign is over." "The days of the so-called war room and the permanent campaign are over," declared Vice President Dick Cheney last month at the Conservative Political Action Conference.

But it was a strange place for Cheney to make the point. At the same conference, Bush's top strategist, Karl Rove, congratulated the assembled activists for generating the grassroots pressure that had led eight Democratic senators to vote for Ashcroft's confirmation. The same effort, he said, would be needed for the tax cut battle.

And, indeed, the same groups that helped confirm Ashcroft are now supplementing Bush's multistate tour, employing campaign-style strategies and personnel. The Issues Management Center, run by a trio of failed Republican presidential campaign operatives—Scott Reed (Dole '96), Bill Dal Col (Forbes '96 and '00), and Greg Mueller (Buchanan '92 and '96, Forbes '00)—is airing radio ads in South Dakota, Louisiana, and Georgia pushing the president's platform. A recent e-mail message sent out by the group explains, "The target of our campaign, and of all GOP energy over the next several months as this battle goes forward, must be the U.S. Senate—specifically those Democratic senators up for reelection next year in states President Bush won handily." Americans for Tax Reform, which consults closely with the White House, is campaigning to get Republican state legislatures to pass resolutions directing their congressional delegations to support Bush's

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Fixing U.S. Intelligence

Bruce Berkowitz is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

Most people don't keep score, but those who do know that the U.S. intelligence community has been slipping—badly.

Think about all the events that have caught the intelligence community by surprise lately: the 1995 nerve gas attack by the Aum Shinrikyo cult on the Tokyo subway system, monetary crises in Mexico, Asia, and Russia, India's nuclear weapons tests in 1998, North Korea's ballistic missile test in 1999, terrorist bombings on U.S. embassies and military personnel in Africa, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. The list keeps growing.

Throw in the targeting of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade and mistaking a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan for a chemical weapons depot (we bombed both). Add a hopelessly ill-informed covert operation in Iraq, and you begin to get the picture of an organization that continues to produce at least one major failure, snafu, or international incident every year.

Okay, intelligence is a tough business. But it's a business with a bottom line—at a minimum, avoiding out-of-the-blue surprises and major errors. After each of these failures, officials promised to do better. So **why is U.S. intelligence still failing?**

One reason is money. Intelligence budgets fell with defense spending after the cold war and remained essentially flat throughout the Clinton administration—even though the number and variety of threats have been growing. Intelligence organizations do need to work smarter and could stand some shaking up. But you simply cannot cover more targets and support more users with less money.

A bigger problem, though, is bureaucratic culture. While the rest of the information world was moving at Internet speed, U.S. intelligence was moving like a supertanker. Recall how AOL and Microsoft scrambled to keep up with change during the past decade? That's what is required. Unfortunately, **intelligence reform has usually produced more paper and process than action.**

Fixing U.S. intelligence requires organizations agile enough to react to the new threats, flexible enough to adopt the new technologies, and open enough to draw on expertise wherever it may be found.

At least three changes are critical. First, the intelligence community needs to rethink how to protect secrets without walling off analysts from their customers, outside information sources, or, for that matter, each other. Stop centralizing; start networking. Lots of officials were worried about India's nuclear program, and lots of intelligence analysts were following it. Why couldn't they talk to each other?

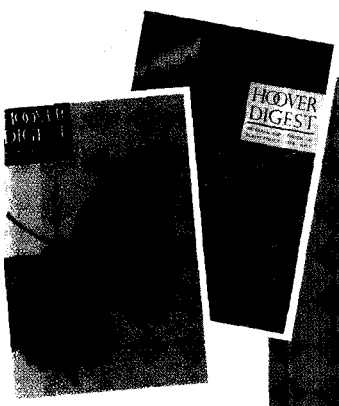
Second, focus government dollars on high-risk, specialized activities that no one else can perform. The private sector has greater flexibility and capital; let it do the routine stuff. Remember that, in the information age, the definition of "routine stuff" constantly changes. Keep refocusing the intelligence community on its unique niche.

And, third, to attract talent, make intelligence careers attractive again. Government may not be able to compete on salary. But it can cut the bureaucratic nonsense and provide opportunity for initiative and adventure.

We missed the opportunity to fix U.S. intelligence during the last eight years. The next four give us a another chance.

— Bruce Berkowitz

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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tax cut. (Four state Houses and five state Senates have passed them so far.) "ATR is organizing this, but the White House is completely supportive," says Grover Norquist, the group's president. "This is the third time we are doing this [this year]." A group called United Seniors Association says it will spend $2 million on ads, and the right-wing Club for Growth ran ads on CNN prior to the House vote, showing a commercial comparing taxes to "the blob." "We're the Club for Growth," the announcer intones, "and we're out to stop the tax blob. President Bush is on our side.... Will your congressman side with taxpayers or with the blob?"

BUSH IS NO reluctant convert to the permanent campaign; it's a natural extension of his personality. Pundits describe Bush as a creature of the corporate world, our M.B.A.-in-chief. And the White House is eager to publicize this image because of its contrast with the famously disorganized Clinton. As a result, we have been inundated with stories about the administration's punctuality and the formal dress now required in the West Wing. But there's reason to believe the White House's corporate structure and penchant for management-speak reflect the personality of Cheney, who successfully ran two massive bureaucracies—the Pentagon and Halliburton—than the personality of George W.

Bush, in contrast to Cheney, was a failed businessman. His skills have always been not in management but in sales. At Andover, Bush—not a gifted athlete like his father—is remembered as a great cheerleader (as were Dwight Eisenhower at West Point and Reagan at Eureka College). During his father's campaigns, W. gravitated not to the policy wonks but to political strategists like Lee Atwater. As owner of the Texas Rangers, Bush took less interest in managing the team than in serving as its number-one fan. (He has said his job was "selling tickets.") And when Bush was governor of Texas, the weakness of the office left him with little more than a bully pulpit from which to cajole the legislature, where the real decision-making occurred. That's the style he's brought to Washington. "Cheney stays in town, and others tend to Washington business, and they send the president on the road," says Mann.

Conservatives like this division of labor just fine. And they predict Bush's cheerleading will benefit not just his legislative agenda but the GOP for years to come. "Ten years from now," says Norquist, "there will not be any Democrats in South Dakota, North Dakota, or Montana." But all this blurring of the line between campaigning and governing could also produce consequences of a different kind. Frustrated Democrats may decide to dust off what must be the most violated law in America: the Anti-Lobbying Act of 1919. House Republicans tried to use it to harass the Clinton administration in 1995 and 1996. Justice Department guidelines say the act prohibits any government employee from "engag[ing] in substantial 'grass roots' lobbying campaigns of telegrams, letters, and other private forms of communication expressly asking recipients to contact Congress in support of or opposition to legislation." The permanent campaign didn't get a bad reputation for nothing. ■

The Clintonites don't sell out!

Tanked

By FRANKLIN FOER

IF THE POST-WHITE-HOUSE Clintonites have a poster child, it's Jack Quinn. As White House counsel, Quinn helped draft anti-lobbying regulations. In 1996 he left for the powerhouse law firm Arnold & Porter and then opened his own lobbying practice, in which he arguably engaged in exactly the type of lobbying those restrictions were supposed to prevent—most famously in January, when he used his friendship with Bill Clinton and knowledge of White House legal procedures to procure a last-minute pardon for fugitive financier Marc Rich.

But while Quinn is a good symbol of the sleaziness of the Clinton White House, he's not a very good symbol of the post-White House Clintonites—because, strangely enough, they're not very sleazy. Unlike refugees from previous administrations, the Clintonites have largely eschewed lucrative, access-driven jobs on K Street and Wall Street in favor of academia, philanthropy, or further policy work. Investment banks reportedly have been salivating over Clinton economic adviser Gene Sperling, but he'll spend the bulk of his time at the Brookings Institution, where he plans to agitate for greater funding of African schools. Chief of Staff John Podesta had his pick of lobbying firms; instead, he's establishing a center for technology policy at Georgetown University Law Center. Domestic policy chief Bruce Reed went to the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), Office of Management and Budget Deputy Director Sylvia Matthews to the Gates Foundation, speechwriter Michael Waldman to Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and budget chief Jack Lew to Georgetown's Public Policy Institute. And Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers, the biggest catch of all, did a short stint at Brookings before accepting the presidency of Harvard University.

The Clintonites aren't selfless—many just find policy more exciting than money. But, motivations notwithstanding, it is more than a little ironic that at the very moment the Clinton administration's corruption has been indelibly emblazoned into the public consciousness, Clinton's aides have been quietly making themselves the least corrupt ex-White House staff in recent memory.

Don't believe me? Consider the alumni of the two administrations that preceded Clinton's. After a stint as Poppy's transportation secretary, Andy Card landed a $600,000-per-year job at the American Automobile Manufacturers Association; Bush père's Deputy Chief of Staff W. Henson Moore left to run the American Forest and Paper Association; C. Boyden Gray took over the business front group Citizens for a Sound Economy; Ronald Reagan's Deputy Public Liaison Red Cavaney became head of the American Petroleum Association. Those who didn't hole up at trade associations set up their own lobbying shops (Nicholas Calio, Ken

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Duberstein, Deborah Steelman, Nick O'Brien) or became partners in existing firms (Roger Mentz, James Burnley IV). And the biggest bigwigs went to the Carlyle Group, an international investment firm that cherry-picked James Baker, Frank Carlucci, Richard Darman, and, of late, even ex-President Bush himself.

WHEN, DURING THE closing weeks of his administration, Clinton revoked his own five-year ban on lobbying by ex-White House staffers, this revolving-door pattern looked set to repeat itself. And then ... it didn't. While a handful of Clintonites—Quinn, Howard Paster, Mack McLarty—have taken easy-money gigs, the majority—including most of the core policy folks—have opted for the marketplace of ideas.

How come? In part, it's the economics of lobbying. With Washington under Republican control, firms have less incentive to spend extravagantly on Democrats. And since Republicans took over the House in 1994, the party leadership has leaned on lobbying firms to hire heavily from the GOP. "When dealing with a Republican-controlled Congress, that means hiring Republicans," snarled Newt Gingrich's press secretary Christina Martin in 1998 after the Electronics Industry Alliance hired former Democratic Representative David McCurdy to run its shop. (Fittingly, Martin herself now works for the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association.)

There's also a cultural explanation for the Clintonites' behavior. For Republicans, there's nothing shameful about helping business survive in the jungle of Washington regulations. But Democrats, even pro-business Clinton Democrats, generally think that most of what corporations lobby for in Washington ends up screwing the little guy. "More so than Republicans, Democrats consider it wicked work," says former Clinton speechwriter Paul Glastris, now a fellow at the Western Policy Center. Another Clinton aide tells me, "If you go to work for an oil company or a lobbying firm, you'll have a hard time getting a job in another Democratic administration." That's not entirely true, as Quinn's example illustrates. But in Democratic administrations, unlike Republican ones, unions and environmentalists often have veto power over certain appointments—and spending your off years lobbying to repeal health, safety, or anti-polluting rules can come back to haunt you when you want to reenter government.

But the biggest reason the Clintonites haven't taken jobs on K Street isn't that they consider business evil; it's that they consider it mindless. "It would be great to go out and earn a lot of money," says Reed. "But the worry is that after a week you'd be bored out of your mind."

Two days later, I get to see what Reed finds more stimulating. "Welcome to my pathetic existence," he says as he greets me at his DLC office. Reed is the DLC's president, but his office contains a plastic trash can, three chairs, a desk piled with stacks of papers, and exactly nothing else. Gazing toward a window with closed blinds, he says: "I used to be on top of the Oval Office, with doors opening onto a terrace. Now I've got a view of the Sizzling Express." And then he dashes off to lunch with Joe Lieberman to discuss the education bill. ■

Bush to schools: Fall down.

Building Trade

By MARCIA YABLON

DAYS AFTER TAKING office, President Bush visited Merritt Elementary School in northeast Washington, D.C. He congratulated Merritt, whose students come largely from low-income families, for achieving test scores above the national average, saying, "I am here to applaud the leadership, the teachers, and a school in the District that has a vision of leadership and accountability." Mobbed by children in green-and-white uniforms, Bush shook hands, signed autographs, and lavished praise.

And then he went back to the White House and sold Merritt out. The budget Bush unveiled last week would ax the New Urgent School Repair Initiative, which would have allocated $1.2 billion to fix up and expand public schools. That means the feds won't help pay for the nearly $7 million in new walls, windows, paint, plaster, lighting, and heating the Army Corps of Engineers says Merritt needs. But at least cutting the school repair program helps make a tax cut possible, right? Actually, probably not. Not only is W. eliminating a worthwhile program, but, somewhere down the line, eliminating it will likely make taxes go up.

The New Urgent School Repair Initiative, approved by Congress last year and set to begin in 2001, was intended to combat the overcrowding and physical deterioration of America's public schools. According to a 1996 General Accounting Office report, one-third of all public schools need "extensive repair or replacement." Nearly 60 percent need new roofs, walls, plumbing, heating, or electrical systems, and more than one-half pose environmental risks such as poor ventilation, flaking paint or plaster, and broken toilets. In addition, overcrowding has forced millions of children into portable classrooms; in California alone, two million students are studying in trailers. And, not surprisingly, when you put kids in crumbling or makeshift classrooms, they don't learn well. In 1993 and 1996, studies conducted at Virginia Polytechnic Institute found that a school's physical condition directly affects the achievement of its students. And since the most dilapidated schools are in poor areas, the most at-risk children suffer.

The Bushies say they aren't cutting money for school repair, merely redirecting it. Under Clinton's budget, 75 percent of the $1.2 billion had to go to school repair, while 25 percent could be used for special-education or technology programs instead. But, under Bush's budget, that 75 percent is no longer guaranteed to fund school repair—and there's reason to believe very little of it will go to fix crumbling schools. "If that money is allowed to be diverted to other purposes," says a Democratic staffer on the House Education and Workforce Committee, "it will be."

One reason is that states and localities are often pressured

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to leave school repair for later, which just increases the cost down the road. "It's always easier to defer maintenance to meet immediate budgetary needs," says Jack Jennings of the nonpartisan Center on Education Policy. Another is that school rebuilding often takes more than one year, and states are loath to direct money to it if they think that funding is going to run out.

And if Bush has his way, it probably will. While school repair had to be reauthorized every year, Clinton's budget had envisioned a multiyear federal effort. "It was intended as an investment that would be made over many years to come, until some dent was made in the need," explains one Democratic aide. After 2001, however, Bush wants Congress to repeal the school repair authorization. Bush's Elementary and Secondary Education Act, currently before Congress, would repeal any program not specifically mentioned in the legislation, and the New Urgent School Repair Initiative is conspicuously absent. Because Bush has published only a general outline of his budget, no one knows exactly where the $1.2 billion would go—to other education programs, to another department or agency, or to help pay for his tax cut—but almost everyone is sure that school repair will be dead by 2002.

Bush allies say it makes sense to shift money out of school construction and repair because they're not the federal government's job. "Republicans felt that traditionally [school repair] has been funded at the state level ... and the more flexibility they have to do that, the better off they are," says Jeff Turcotte, a spokesman for Republican Senator Judd Gregg of New Hampshire. But, under the school repair program, states already had a lot of flexibility. The feds sent money to the states, which made their own decisions about which schools to repair or expand. In fact, the only school construction programs that require federal micromanagement are the ones Bush would like to maintain: federal school construction programs on Army bases and Indian reservations. But those programs require Washington to decide which schools get the money—states are cut out of the loop entirely.

Then, of course, there's the macro-justification: Bush has to cut spending so you can have lower taxes. But, while Bush's budget cuts federal taxes, many experts predict that cutting the school repair program will lead to higher taxes at the state or local level. Joyce Ladner, a senior policy fellow at the Brookings Institution, says the physical conditions of America's public schools are so dire that if Washington doesn't provide money to rebuild them, the states may have to do so themselves. But, adds Nick Johnson, a policy analyst at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the economic slowdown has dried up budget surpluses, and the "states really are crunched." Any new spending on school repair, he predicts, "would have to come from fiscal increases." In other words, taxpayers could get "refunds" from the federal government only to give the money back to their states.

If states pass the buck as well, finding the money for school construction will be left to towns and cities. And, since the schools in greatest need of repair are disproportionately in the poorest areas, that means raising property taxes or sales taxes on the people least able to pay. Too bad W. didn't mention that on his trip to Merritt Elementary. ■

France goes nuts for parity.

Same Différence

By JUDITH WARNER

"ALL ANYONE IS talking about is women," says Françoise Gaspard, former mayor of the French city of Dreux and a former member of parliament. "There has been an incredible sign of rebirth in feminist awareness." She's talking about last weekend's local elections, the first conducted under a "parity" law that requires French political parties to field equal numbers of male and female candidates. Gaspard is right that the law has all of France talking; indeed, it has changed French politics. Thanks to the sudden flood of new female candidates (these were proportional elections, with voters selecting not just one but a slate of six candidates), the percentage of women serving on city councils, currently 22 percent, is expected to double after this Sunday's second round of voting. An overwhelming victory, crow feminists, party leaders, and most French opinion makers. A radical change. An overdue response to France's shameful record as the European country with the lowest female political participation. A second French Revolution, even.

But while Gaspard and her allies may be correct about the parity law's political significance, they're wrong about its moral significance. The parity law returns France to a prefeminist, essentialist vision in which women are females first, citizens second. "The people and their representatives are sexed individuals, masculine and feminine," says Sylviane Agacinski, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin's philosopher-wife, whose 1998 book, *Sexual Politics*, is the bible of the pro-parity movement. In her formulation, parity is "the political interpretation of sexual difference." In other words, France needs equal representation not so women can express their fundamental equality with men but so they can express their fundamental difference, thereby bringing greater femininity to public life. If that's what passes for French feminism, then it's dead—or ought to be.

The idea of gender quotas has been floating around the margins of French politics since the early '80s—rejected by all the major parties, who alternately deemed it unconstitutional, divisive, and downright silly. But it resurfaced powerfully in the late '90s, for two reasons. First, Jospin's Socialists, brought to power unexpectedly and dogged by suggestions that they weren't ready to rule, rummaged through their old files for Big Ideas and found two crowd-pleasers: the reduction of the workweek to 35 hours and *la parité*.

Second, parity represented the ingenious intersection of French feminism and French mainstream culture. As in the United States, French feminism has come to embrace ideas of female difference and to treat "equality feminism," with its

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emphasis on the similar capacities of men and women, as an ideology of Uncle Toms. "It became tacky to just talk about equality," says Elisabeth Badinter, one of the few prominent female intellectuals to speak out against the new law. "If you were against injustice, you had to be pro-parity." But making a fetish of difference also appealed to France's political and intellectual elite, much of which has embraced parity as a way to help France get in touch with its feminine side. "Relations to others as they are, sensitivity, concreteness, a care for daily life have been rejected from the political realm," wrote ten prominent women politicians in a 1996 manifesto published in the newsweekly *L'Express* that helped launch the parity movement. "It is time," they wrote, "... to feminize the Republic." Indeed, Eric Fassin, a sociologist at the École Normale Supérieure, suggests that parity, with its essentialist underpinnings, has soothed French anxieties that American-style feminism might come to France and "[destroy] relations between the sexes." So, in an effort to avoid "American" sexlessness, the French embraced a measure that inscribed sexual difference on the body politic.

There was still the problem of France's ingrained hostility to quotas and American-style political correctness. But Agacinski and her supporters shrewdly surmounted that hurdle by linking parity to the French universalist tradition. Parity, they said over and over, was not American-style identity politics, because sexual difference isn't a difference like any other. Since everyone is either male or female, sexual difference is, in Agacinski's words, a "universal differential"—it applies to everyone. So clever was the argument that, by the time the elections rolled around, parity had become the rallying cry of just about every right-thinking pundit and politico in France—with the notable exception of a handful of mostly Jewish intellectuals who argued that, as recent history has proved, it's not necessarily a good idea to single people out because of their difference.

As an idea, parity has been hugely popular. In practice, it has proved more problematic. The municipal elections were an inglorious spectacle, with France's political parties desperate to recruit women. In Paris, the Socialists went from department to department at the top universities. The Gaullist Rally for the Republic Party appealed for candidates on the Internet. In some small cities, parties had to drop out of the race altogether because they couldn't find enough women.

Already there is grumbling from young men deprived of the chance to run for local office because there was no room on the ballot. And already there's grumbling from women candidates discovering that just because they're elected doesn't mean they'll get to *govern*. "They're realizing that they can be elected and still be kept out of power, and they're furious," says Gaspard. French women who want careers in politics still face blatant, extreme misogyny: insults, off-color jokes, and shouted comments about panties, appearance, and sexual desirability. "Obscenity is the daily bread of a woman on the campaign trail," Employment Minister Elisabeth Guigou wrote in her 1997 memoir, *Being a Woman in Politics*. The parity law is not likely to change that.

There might have been another way. Things could have been allowed to run their natural course, and the ascension of greater numbers of baby-boomer and post-boomer women into politics would have changed France's political elite, just as it has changed French medicine, law, and business. (Women now make up more than half the graduating classes in medical and law schools.) "It might have taken another ten years," says Badinter. "But we wouldn't have had to pervert the principles of the republic along the way."

Badinter thinks the real barriers to women's participation in French politics are mundane. Most elected officials are poorly paid. Political meetings are generally held in the evenings; many women say they can't afford the extra babysitting. Nor can they count on their husbands to help at home. The solution isn't mandated parity but more decent, flexible social arrangements: pay politicians a living wage so they don't have to hold a job and an elected office at the same time, something that's just about impossible for a woman with children. Or emulate Sweden, where women make up 45 percent of parliament, evening sessions are rare to accommodate family schedules, and there is even an on-site day care center. "The political system," Badinter says, has to "take into account how women live their private lives." Problem is, that's not a very sexy idea. And, worst of all, it might actually work. ■

The oil industry's man at the State Department.

Drill Sergeant

By LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

COLIN POWELL WANDERED off the reservation again last week. Discussing North Korea, the secretary of state announced that the administration planned "to pick up where President Clinton and his administration left off." Only the administration hadn't decided anything of the sort, as the White House clarified the next day. But last week's back-and-forth on Korea was a model of unanimity compared with the Bush team's disarray over Iraq. For the past few weeks, Powell has been freelancing—unveiling, among other proposals, a new plan to ease the decade-old sanctions regime against America's Gulf war foe. And once again the rest of the Bush team isn't on board. "Saddam should not read into our discussions about making [Iraq] policy more effective any

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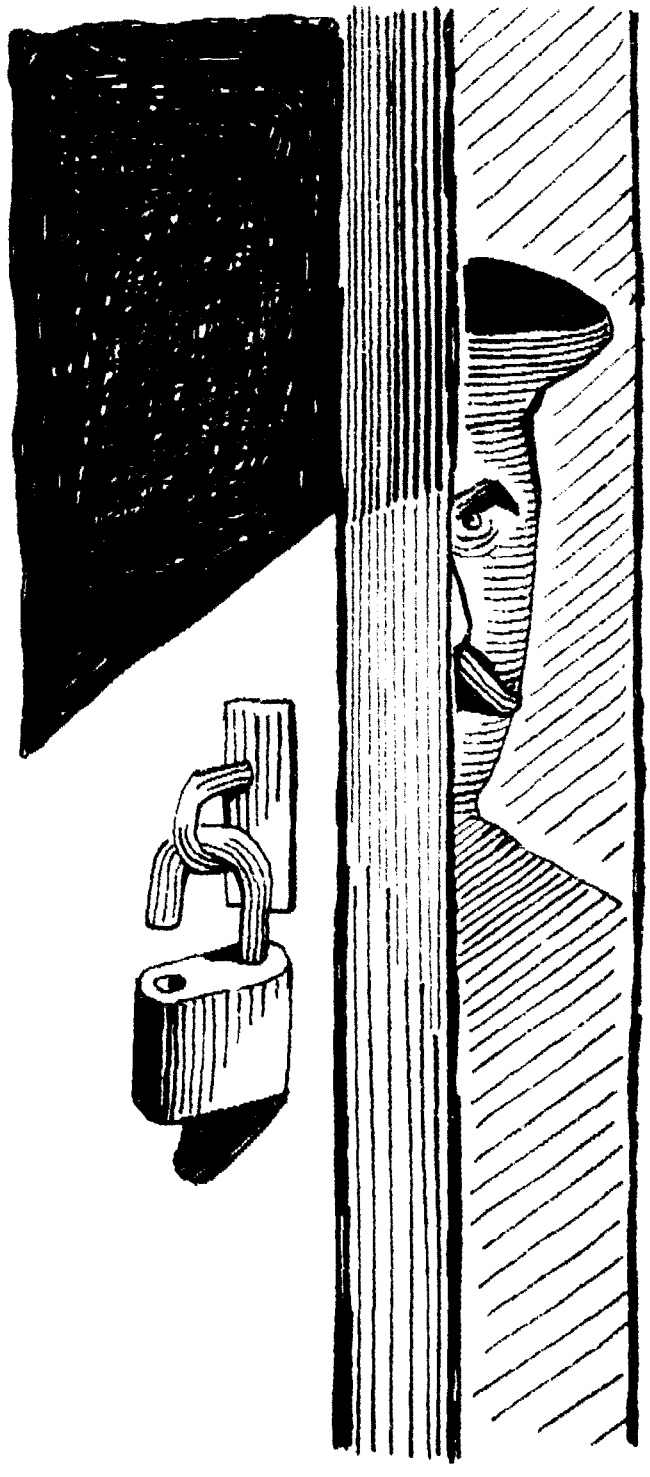
weakness in our position," President Bush averred in Powell's wake. But there *is* a weakness in Bush's position: his secretary of state.

Just last month Powell was pledging to keep sanctions against Iraq in place until Saddam allowed weapons inspectors back into the country. "We have to be vigilant," he insisted, "and I will be carrying this message to my friends in the region." But when Powell finally dropped in on his Middle Eastern friends a few weeks later, instead of vigilance he brought a plan to soften the embargo. The imperative, he explained, was to "relieve the burden on the Iraqi people" and thereby to defuse criticism of the United States. His friends in the region, moreover, had told him it was "the right thing to do." Problem was, his friends in Washington—namely, the president, vice president, and defense secretary—hadn't told him anything of the kind, as Powell acknowledged during his trip. Indeed, to many Powell appeared to be offering something for nothing. "Improved sanctions or smarter sanctions, none of them are going to end the threat from Saddam Hussein," complained Richard Perle, a Bush campaign adviser. Nor were the Iraqis buying Powell's sales pitch: Government officials promptly termed his proposal "rubbish" and declared they would never let weapons inspectors return. Powell's Arab friends, too, disparaged his scheme as soon as he got back on his plane.



But Powell didn't dream up this policy disaster on his own. Though the notion of scaling back sanctions against Iraq has been floating around the State Department for some time, much of the credit for dusting it off belongs to Richard Haass, a Powell ally from the first Bush administration whom the secretary of state has installed as his director of policy planning with the rank of ambassador. Haass, who's made a name for himself over the years championing carrots rather than sticks in America's dealings with Iraq, Iran, Libya, and pretty much everyone else. (Israel being the occasional exception), has become Powell's Middle East guru. And in recent weeks he's been peddling to administration officials recommendations gleaned from a policy paper titled, aptly enough, "Iraq: Time for a Modified Approach." Written last month by Meghan O'Sullivan, who worked for Haass at the Brookings Institution, the brief for softening the sanctions regime neatly anticipates almost every utterance Powell has made recently about Iraq—from his insistence that loosening the embargo will dispel Arab anger to the old canard that "there is linkage to the situation between the Israelis and Palestinians." Bush, of course, inherited Haass from his father's Middle East team. And, with him, he's inheriting its worst inclinations.

Haass's return to Middle East policy-making, coupled with the sanctions episode, has thrown administration hawks into a funk. The enmity between Haass and the Bush team's Iraq hard-liners dates back to the Gulf war, when Haass directed Middle East policy on Poppy's National Security Council. A protégé of NSC adviser Brent Scowcroft, Haass gained a reputation as an ambitious technocrat whose brandy-and-cigars realpolitik neatly fit the administration he served. Haass penned some of Bush père's and James Baker's scathing remarks about Israel and helped devise the strategy of using loan guarantees to pressure the Jewish state. But it was his performance during the Gulf war that sealed his reputation. In the run-up to the conflict, Haass counseled "moderation" toward Saddam and discounted warnings that he would invade Kuwait. And when, in the war's aftermath, Pentagon officials like Paul Wolfowitz pleaded that the United States had an obligation to prevent Saddam from slaughtering the Iraqi insurgents whom we had encouraged to rise up, Haass, like Powell, argued for turning a blind eye. Which is

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exactly what we did.

After Bush lost the 1992 election, Haass parlayed his Gulf war experience into several book contracts, a consulting gig at NBC, paid appearances on the lecture circuit, and, finally, a post as director of foreign policy studies at Brookings. From these perches he continued to weigh in on the policy debates of the day—particularly sanctions, a topic about which he directed an ongoing research project, authored and edited books and articles, and became a widely quoted authority. He doesn't like them. In Haass's view, sanctions foster anti-Americanism, rarely succeed when applied unilaterally, and jeopardize core strategic interests. One of the things that upsets him most about sanctions is their humanitarian toll—the fact that they "can work against forces promoting political pluralism" and punish "innocent victims."

But impoverished residents of Baghdad and Pyongyang aren't the only victims Haass worries about. He's also concerned that America's fondness for embargoes "is bad for particular businesses." Chief among these businesses, needless to say, is the oil industry. So it's perhaps no surprise that oil companies such as Conoco and ARCO fund a chunk of Haass's sanctions project at Brookings—an undertaking that has produced, among other things, O'Sullivan's policy paper on Iraq. According to Conoco representatives, Haass has also consulted for the oil company, which the U.S. government barred from doing business in Iran in 1995. USA*Engage, the anti-sanctions business coalition, tirelessly promotes Haass's work. And another oil firm, the Santa Fe International Corporation, whose parent company helps pay for his sanctions project, even installed him on its board of directors. "That's perfect," sighs one Bush adviser. "Why not just have the oil companies brief Powell directly?"

NOW THAT HE'S back in government, Haass has picked up where he left off during the final days of the first Bush administration—trying to soften Iraq policy. "Richard's got this window of opportunity," says a frustrated Bush official. "We're all lying low in our offices waiting to be confirmed or trying to get our people on line, and he's out there wrecking Iraq policy." But Haass's eagerness to steal a march on his administration rivals could exact a steep price. When Powell offered him the policy planning slot, Haass insisted it be accompanied by an ambassadorial rank. An ambassador's title, however, means Haass must be confirmed by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, whose chairman, Jesse Helms, distrusts him. And while Haass may carry out his functions as policy planning director prior to confirmation, he is not allowed to carry out his broader ambassadorial duties. But Haass has flouted this prohibition, attending White House meetings, holding discussions with Israeli officials, and performing other duties related to his prospective ambassadorial slot. Indeed, he's been doing all this so ostentatiously that Senate aides have complained to the White House.

But what really rankles Bush hard-liners is less his field trips than his agenda. "Iraq: Time for a Modified Approach" doesn't just advise scaling back sanctions. It also advocates permitting foreign investment in the Iraqi oil industry, terminating the flight ban on Baghdad, and scaling back the no-fly zones above Iraq. And while it generously proposes "training the [Iraqi] opposition to operate a judicial system, run elections, prosecute war criminals, and even conduct truth commissions," it counsels against extending military support. In his own writings Haass has advised that "even though the world would be far better off without Saddam, making his ouster an *explicit* goal would also be wrong." No wonder Powell has made Haass the head of his "regime change" policy group.

More alarming still is Haass's intention, according to colleagues at the State Department and Brookings, to bring his sanctions project collaborator on board in a policy position. Consider O'Sullivan's recent writings. In addition to "Iraq: Time for a Modified Approach," her oeuvre includes such titles as "The Politics of Dismantling Containment" and "Replacing the Rogue Rhetoric: A New Label Opens the Way to a Better Policy." O'Sullivan finds the term "rogue state," which she claims "is interpreted by U.S. allies and other nations as symptomatic of extremist American policies," especially demeaning. "Noam Chomsky," she adds approvingly, "suggests that the United States itself qualifies for 'rogue' status." Nor, in her view, does engaging countries like Iraq, Iran, Libya, and North Korea mean simply lifting sanctions against them. As she spells out in a piece written for the French journal *Politique Étrangère*, true engagement means reducing America's reliance on military force, covert action, and even regional alliances. Hence, after the recent round of air strikes against Baghdad, O'Sullivan complained to the press about U.S. planes patrolling the skies above Iraq. If all this sounds familiar, well, like the sanctions project on which she labors, part of O'Sullivan's own salary at Brookings is paid with oil money.

SO WHAT'S HAPPENED to the Iraq hard-liners? The Senate just recently confirmed Wolfowitz, the administration's most impassioned Iraq hawk, as deputy secretary of defense. Zalmay Khalilzad, a former Wolfowitz aide and outspoken champion of the Iraqi opposition, may also be joining the Pentagon team. And last week Rumsfeld reportedly settled on Douglas Feith, a close ally of Wolfowitz and Perle, as his undersecretary of defense for policy. In addition to being a bureaucratic pit bull and one of the smartest neoconservatives in Washington, Feith cares passionately about three things: missile defense, Israel, and overthrowing Saddam Hussein. (Alas, just as Powell challenged Wolfowitz's appointment, his team reportedly objects to Feith's as well.) At the White House, meanwhile, John Hannah, an Iraq hawk and former staffer at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, has just joined Dick Cheney's office to handle the vice president's Saddam portfolio. Finally, the NSC's senior Middle East slot, which Clinton holdover Bruce Reidel still occupies, has become the object of a noisy battle between the two factions.

But if the administration's vertebrates can't stop Powell and Haass, Congress may have to. Had the Clintonites pursued Powell's sanctions proposal, Republicans would have

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screamed bloody murder. And yet, whenever Powell appears on the Hill, otherwise fire-breathing conservatives are reduced to giggling schoolgirls. (Last week, for example, congressional aides boasted that members of the House International Relations Committee would grill Powell when he appeared to testify about Iraq. Instead, they spent the hearing tripping over one another to pay tribute to the general.) Still, some legislators have begun to gripe. In the House, International Relations Chairman Henry Hyde has questioned the wisdom of Powell's approach. And, in the Senate, Sam Brownback, an ally of the Iraqi opposition, complained, "[W]e're saying we don't like [Saddam], but we're then not willing to go ahead and take steps to remove him." Unfortunately, Democratic senators on the Foreign Relations Committee, like John Kerry and Chris Dodd, have been so busy opposing former cold warriors like assistant secretary of state for Latin America nominee Otto Reich that they haven't uttered a peep about Haass. Still, Senate aides predict his confirmation hearing could turn ugly.

Of course, if Congress fails to halt the Powell-Haass push for détente with Iraq, at least there's still one hard-liner who won't go along. His name is Saddam Hussein. ■

Tom Daschle's struggle to save the Dems.

Last, Best Hope

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

IN EARLY MARCH, George W. Bush was on a roll. The president had set out on a campaign-style swing across the nation to win support for his tax cut. Night after night, the evening news showed Bush before cheering throngs, whom he delighted with folksy talk of returning "the people's money." Democrats were left sniping from behind podiums in Capitol Hill conference rooms, pointing dourly at their pie charts.

Then Bush went to South Dakota. He targeted the state because he had beaten Al Gore there and because one of its Democratic senators, Tim Johnson, is considered a possible tax cut supporter. Unfortunately for Bush, the state's other senator is Minority Leader Tom Daschle. Though not known for his temper, Daschle did not take kindly to the president's decision to cheerlead in his backyard. Adding to his annoyance, a reporter had told Daschle about the trip, and Daschle couldn't get the White House to confirm it for twelve hours. So when a Sioux Falls TV station offered to host a live "discussion" between the president and the minority leader, Daschle accepted immediately and sent Bush a letter (also released to the public) urging that he accept as well. "Too often matters of this magnitude are presented in the context of staged political events," Daschle wrote, subtly mocking Bush's bus-in-the-zealots appearances. A peeved Ari Fleischer, Bush's press secretary, curtly informed reporters that Bush's schedule was full and that "there will be no such debate."

But Daschle wasn't through. He quickly filmed a pair of TV ads criticizing Bush's tax plan as risky, unfair, and unaffordable and promoting the Democratic alternative. Though they ran only locally, the ads were excerpted on national evening news programs. And the same evening that Bush spoke before 1,500 cheering fans in a Sioux Falls airport hangar, Daschle appeared at a downtown restaurant, where, according to the *Omaha World-Herald*, he "listened to the worries and concerns of South Dakota farmers, small town officials, teachers, firefighters, and single mothers over coffee and cookies." In the end, Bush's South Dakota trip backfired. Johnson showed no sign of being swayed, Daschle won extensive airtime, and Bush looked as if he'd ducked a debate. Score one for Tom Daschle.

It was a rare Democratic victory in a season dominated by the new president. And it underscored what many Washington Democrats now believe: that the tax cut fight that will define Washington for years to come is turning into a struggle between the president and Tom Daschle. Dick Gephardt, though more experienced and better known, has been weakened by his repeated promises, and failures, to win back the House. Bush rolled over Gephardt in the House, picking up ten Democratic defectors for his income tax cut and surrendering not a single Republican. So, while Gephardt and Daschle continue to work closely together, "Daschle has assumed the role of the more senior partner," says an aide to a prominent congressional Democrat. In the Senate, where the real fight will occur, there are bigger Democratic names: Ted Kennedy, Joe Lieberman, even Hillary Clinton. And there are presidential hopefuls like John Edwards, John Kerry, and Evan Bayh. But no one other than Daschle possesses the strategic savvy or personal influence to hold the Democrats together in the face of Bush's onslaught.

It was Daschle who took the lead in crafting the Democrats' tax cut alternative and in generating the "Lexus versus muffler" analogy that has become the party's clearest expression of the way Bush's tax cut would disproportionately benefit the rich. And Daschle commands more authority over his caucus than the sniped-at Gephardt: When Georgia Senator Zell Miller endorsed Bush's tax cut in January, it was widely assumed that other conservative Democrats would quickly follow suit. They haven't. Daschle has convinced several moderates to keep quiet, even if they're contemplating backing the tax cut, so as not to undercut the Democrats' bargaining position. In fact, the recent waffling has been almost

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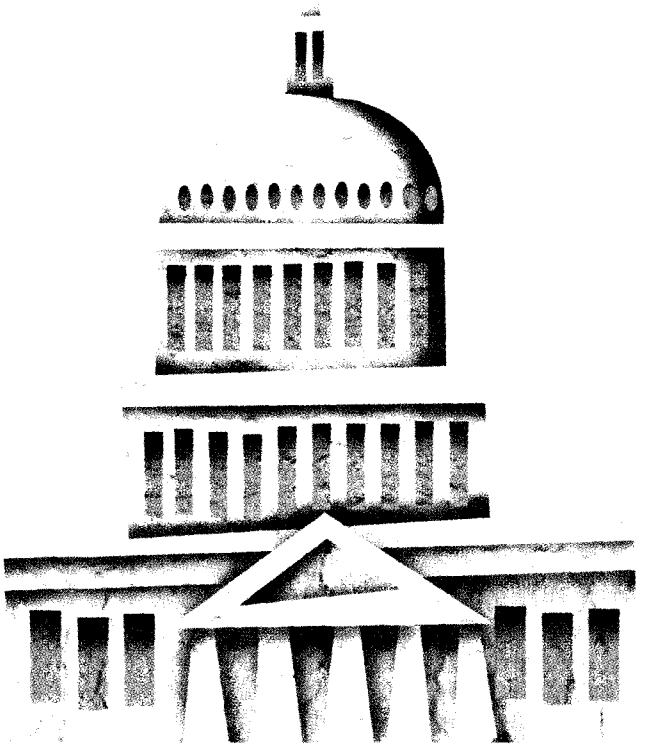
exclusively on the Republican side, with two liberal Republicans saying they won't vote for the Bush cut and several others sounding nervous.

Daschle, in short, is the only Democrat with a shot at derailing the tax cut that could make or break the Bush presidency. If Daschle fails, he'll be derided the way he always has been—as a bland, visionless placeholder in a party that lacks a real leader. If he succeeds, he'll be the most powerful politician in America.



When Daschle came to Washington as an obscure Midwestern senator in 1986, no one imagined that this park ranger in a dark suit would someday lead his party. But he quickly bonded with then-Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, who came to consider Daschle his top deputy. When Mitchell declared his intention to retire, in 1994, Daschle promptly declared his candidacy to replace him. Elder Senate statesmen like Kennedy and Robert Byrd were unimpressed. "Several senior members said ... 'We can't let this guy be our leader,'" says a former top aide to a senior Democratic senator. "They thought he was a little soft, a little weak, not particularly bold or innovative." And he was certainly inexperienced. One longtime Daschle adviser recalls getting a call from the senator's flustered aides after Daschle had been asked to appear on a Sunday morning political talk show. "His staff called and said, 'He's never been on a [talk] show before,'" the adviser recalls. "'Can you come over and help brief him?'"

The old bulls championed the more combative, more ideological Chris Dodd of Connecticut. The race, which was described as a "generational struggle," was tied the day before the vote. That day Dodd won what appeared to be the decisive vote from freshman Senator Carol Moseley-Braun by offering her a precious seat on the Senate Finance Committee in return. But when news of the pledge reached Daschle that night, he immediately traded his own Finance seat for Moseley-Braun's vote. Dodd felt he was robbed, and so did some others. "[Daschle] basically stole the thing as far as I'm concerned," says a former Senate Democratic aide. Daschle won by a single vote, but the Democrats lost Congress before he took over the majority leader's job, and many in the party worried whether Daschle could guide them out of the wilderness. "People were fairly open about raising doubts as to whether he would be able to lead," says the longtime adviser.

But Daschle quickly won over critics with his gentle, loose-reined leadership style. Daschle has endless patience, a quality that is crucial but often overlooked in Washington. He has an almost superhuman ability to sit quietly while his colleagues do what they love best: talk. One after another, senators describe his tireless canvassing and ability to listen as a welcome departure from his predecessors Mitchell and Byrd, both of whom were known for their autocratic, top-down style. "My first call on the Gulf war was Mitchell saying, 'We're gonna go this way,'" says one Democratic senator. Daschle, by contrast, "doesn't lead by threat or cajoling," says New York Senator Charles Schumer. "People really feel like they matter, like they're consulted," adds North Dakota's Byron Dorgan. "He makes people feel like they're invested in the process." Of course, Daschle is often steering in the guise of listening. "If you watch him guide a discussion, it's almost as if he's just taking everybody's temperature," says one former Democratic leadership aide. "But the next thing you know everybody's ended up the way he wanted them to go."

I glimpsed Daschle's talent for listening firsthand when I visited him recently in his long, narrow office overlooking the National Mall. While many senators and congressmen receive audiences regally, holding forth from behind massive desks, Daschle settled himself into one of two light-blue armchairs arranged at a 45-degree angle, inches from one another, to facilitate easy conversation. He sat almost perfectly quiet and still, never interrupting or preempting a question. But all the while he fixed an intense, owl-like gaze on me. In his twenties, Daschle served as an Air Force intelligence officer, poring over satellite images in search of military targets. Today he's doing much the same thing, searching people's faces for clues, for points of opportunity.

Republicans have come to respect Daschle's ability—and to fear it. "The Democrats have skillfully, consistently, and artfully blocked us," says a senior Senate GOP aide, surveying the past several years. "The gridlock in this place has been amazing. They have created gridlock in one breath and called us a do-nothing Congress in the next, and they have gotten away with it." Early in his tenure, Daschle played shrewd defense against the Republican Contract With America, using the Senate's filibuster rule, which requires just 40 votes to prevent "cloture" on debate and thereby essentially to kill legislation, to devastating effect. Maintaining impressive unity among his 47 Democrats, Daschle knocked down ambitious Republican measures like regulatory reform and a balanced-budget amendment. "In that first, dark year [after the Republican revolution], there was not a single time when he lost a cloture vote," says Ron Klain, a former Daschle strategist who went on to be a top aide to Gore.

By 1996, Daschle had grown even bolder. With the aid of a resurgent Kennedy, Daschle made a fool of Bob Dole over

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health care and the minimum wage, driving him from the Senate and helping ruin his presidential campaign before it had really begun. And when Bill Clinton's impeachment reached the Senate floor in 1999, Daschle babysat nervous Democrats and negotiated deftly with Majority Leader Trent Lott to reach the best outcome Clinton could have hoped for: a short trial with no witnesses and a clear vote to acquit. "[W]e absolutely put our fate in the hands of Tom Daschle," White House Chief of Staff John Podesta told *The Washington Post*.

Though inexperienced to be leading his caucus, Daschle has proved a master of the interlocking ways to wield power in the Senate. One former Democratic aide recalls a day from the minimum wage fight when Dole was "filling up the amendment tree," a tactic designed to prevent the Democrats from attaching the wage hike to pending legislation. Even an old soldier like Kennedy was unsure how to respond. "There's a set of tricks for situations like that, and some of them don't get used for thirty years," says a former aide who was on the Senate floor at the time. "Kennedy was asking around, trying to figure out how to beat that tactic." Daschle came up with a way, and the minimum wage increase passed.

And Daschle can play an outside game as well. When flooding throughout the Midwest submerged roads and farms in 1996, Congress rushed to pass a huge disaster-relief bill. But Republicans attached two amendments—one to keep the government running in the event of another budget stalemate and another banning "sampling" by the Census Bureau. Seeing a golden opportunity, Daschle pounced on the Republican maneuver, spinning the fight into a national story about competing values: Democrats were the good guys, trying to bail out farmers whose barns were underwater, and Republicans were partisan ideologues holding the relief bill hostage with unrelated amendments. "He was able to dramatize it to great effect," says a former top Daschle aide. At the peak of the battle, Daschle enlisted his colleagues in an all-night mediathon in which senators spent three-hour shifts, from six o'clock in the evening to nine o'clock in the morning, giving interviews to local TV and radio outlets across the country. The flood bill affected only about a half-dozen states. But, casting the fight in broader terms, Daschle held together his entire caucus. "Daschle completely routed them," says the former aide. "It just killed them." The disaster-relief bill, concluded *The Washington Post*, "turned out to be a disaster without relief for Republicans on Capitol Hill."

During the disaster-relief fight, as during Bush's trip to South Dakota, Daschle displayed a sophisticated ability to use the media. "He really understands modern communications in modern politics," says Klain. Envious of the GOP's long-standing dominance of talk radio and blast-faxing, Daschle created a caucus committee to explore high-tech ways for senators to communicate their messages. As a result, the Democrats set up a state-of-the-art TV studio in a Senate office building to beam their messages back home—the power of which was shown by the disaster-relief fight. Daschle even brought talk-radio hosts to the Hill to hear the party's latest spin.

Daschle's inside-outside combination has turned his five-year duel with Senate GOP leader Trent Lott into something close to a rout, wiping out the GOP's six-year majority in the Senate. After Senate Democrats pulled even with Republicans last fall,

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Daschle wangled an unprecedented "power-sharing" agreement from Lott, winning Democrats equal representation and equal budgets on Senate committees. That translates into a vastly increased influence over legislation before it reaches the Senate floor. And it means Bush needs an extra vote on the Senate Finance Committee for his tax cut—which is one reason House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Thomas could push the cut through in a single day while his Senate counterpart, Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley, says he won't be done for months. "Without that victory," declares former Democratic Senator Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, "it's basically all over."

Daschle didn't win everything: Some Democrats had pushed for shared committee chairmanships. But that was never a realistic goal. And a good measure of who got the better end of the deal is Senate conservatives' barely concealed anger at Lott. "There are a lot of Republicans who think Daschle got a better deal out of this than [we] did," says one senior GOP Senate staffer. The conservative activist Paul Weyrich, speaking to *USA Today*, recently said of Lott, "I don't think anybody has disappointed me more in public life." As a result, Lott has this year endured serious talk of a possible challenge to his job as leader—a prospect Daschle, the man elected by one vote, has never had to entertain.

BUT THE FIGHT with Lott is yesterday's battle. In the fight with Bush, Daschle's chances rest less on his ability to negotiate with the Republican majority leader than on his ability to negotiate with moderates on both sides of the aisle. Roughly speaking, about 40 senators in each party have dug in for or against the tax cut. The rest will be swayed by the combination of private cajoling and public spin Daschle has been fine-tuning for years.

Where moderate Democrats are concerned, Daschle has a phenomenal record of preventing defections, beginning with the Contract With America and continuing through impeachment and (thus far) the Bush tax cut. Last spring, for example, Daschle averted a minor crisis when centrist Dems, led by Lieberman and Bayh, feuded with liberals, led by Kennedy, over the Democrats' education-reform proposal. Outnumbered and frustrated, the centrists were prepared to broker a deal with Republicans, who were presenting their own bill. But Daschle reined them in, adding new school-accountability language to the Democratic proposal and allowing the centrists to offer their original version as an amendment so they could campaign on it. "One of Daschle's great strengths," says Michael Meehan, the senator's former political director, "is that everyone gets to bring his issue to the floor."

Today, with the Senate deadlocked and Strom Thurmond's health in question, Daschle has another carrot to dangle in front of fence-sitting Democratic moderates: a majority. While there has been talk for years of Democrats winning back the House, it is the Senate that is now within reach—a goal that is said to obsess Daschle. Democrats like to note that 20 GOP incumbents, versus just 14 Democrats, are up for reelection in 2002. And Democratic senators suspect that if Daschle gains leverage over committee chairmanships, he'll remember who jumped ship on the tax cut. "They now realize they're on the cusp of winning the majority, and ... it would be crazy to turn back now," the former aide says. "So now a lot of these people who are on their own, off the reservation, say, 'Does it come at the cost of me getting a gavel?' Everything gets looked at through that filter."

Finally, Daschle leads moderate Democrats by example. Like key tax cut fence-sitters such as Georgia's Max Cleland, Louisiana's Mary Landrieu and John Breaux, and Montana's Max Baucus, Daschle comes from a state that Bush carried handily in November, and he understands the political pressures that creates. Daschle's centrist reputation and low-key style also help him woo moderate Republicans such as Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe of Maine, Jim Jeffords of Vermont, and Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania. During impeachment, all four (and the late John Chafee) joined the Democrats to vote against impeachment. (Senate Democrats, by contrast, didn't suffer a single defection.) Later that year, Daschle peeled off six centrist Republicans for a post-Columbine amendment to close the gun-show loophole. And, when he forced a vote on campaign finance reform, seven moderate Republicans—including Snowe, Collins, Jeffords, Chafee, and Specter—joined him. "Daschle can't easily be caricatured," says John Czwartacki, Lott's former press secretary. "Therefore it's hard to rally the troops around a common enemy. He's a guy thought of as coming from a 'good state,' a Western moderate. Keeping the caucus together would be easier if your opponent was Ted Kennedy or Chuck Schumer or some Northeastern liberal."

BUT DASCHLE'S PAST success took place against the backdrop of a Democratic president. And, as recently as a month ago, Republican control of the White House—skillfully deployed by a Bush administration firmly in control of the terms of debate—looked as if it was rendering Daschle irrelevant.

In the past few weeks, however, Daschle seems to have regained his stride. He has worked tirelessly to make sure Bush's larger megaphone doesn't drown out his own. While centrists may have flinched at his photo-op with the Lexus sedan (intended to illustrate the excessive benefits Bush's tax cut would grant the wealthy), it was a hit with the media, making every evening news show. He and Gephardt have conducted conference calls with editors and columnists around the country trying to sway regional opinion leaders against the Bush plan. Daschle's televised response to Bush's national budget address and his TV ads in South Dakota carried just the sort of sharp but soothing message that worked so well for Clinton.

And the more time Daschle has had to build his case, the more effective he's become. After Bush released his skeletal budget preview two weeks ago, Daschle pounced on its proposed cuts in such all-American programs as agriculture and—this was almost too good to be true—disaster relief. "In recent years, South Dakota has been beset by fires and floods and tornadoes," Daschle mournfully told reporters. "In the face of these catastrophes, it's often meant disaster relief that has helped our families repair and rebuild. And yet President Bush's budget would lead to deep cuts in the agency that

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actually manages disaster assistance." After enumerating a list of popular programs—agriculture, highway construction—Daschle explained that "we're cutting these programs in order to accommodate the tax cut."

Declared all but inevitable after Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan endorsed it in late January, Bush's tax cut juggernaut now seems just a little shakier. Once adamant that his tax plan was nonnegotiable, Bush has begun to talk of compromise—"negotiating through the newspapers," as one leading Democratic strategist puts it. Last week, the White House seemed to contradict itself on the tax cut "trigger," endorsed by about a dozen Senate moderates, which would condition the tax cut on debt reduction. At least some of the idea's proponents had the impression the White House was supportive. But now Bush appears unwilling to accept any trigger that doesn't contain an override clause so outrageously broad that Daschle should easily be able to discredit it. And now that they've revealed their worries about the tax cut's size, moderate Republicans will have a harder time voting for it as currently written.

Even the Democrats' early conciliatory tone is looking smarter as the press depicts Republicans as partisan zealots for ramming Bush's income tax cuts through the House with barely any committee or floor debate. *The New York Times* bitterly editorialized about "VOTING FIRST, DEBATING LATER"; *The Washington Post* complained that Democrats were "shut out" of a "stage show" in the House. The House vote also angered moderate Senate Democrats like Breaux, who groused that, Republicans had "alienated their natural allies." "The House vote was truly galvanizing," says a leading Democratic strategist. "Even the Republicans realize that. Lott didn't make noises about quick movement [toward a Senate vote]." And a later vote, the strategist points out, means Bush will have to negotiate the tax cut in the context of his budget, which will highlight its trade-offs with spending—exactly the context the White House wants to avoid.

All of which suggests that when the tax cut hits the Senate floor in late spring or early summer, moderates will insist that it be smaller, weighted more to middle incomes, or both. Republicans already privately concede that their battle to eliminate the estate tax is all but lost. Of course, had you told most Democrats a year ago that they would help pass a tax cut in the neighborhood of $1 trillion, they would hardly have cheered. But if Senate moderates hold firm, the Democrats may be able to pass a tax package that will let Daschle claim victory. If Democrats are lucky, a few GOP right-wingers will be so disgruntled they'll even vote no. Bush will certainly boast that he negotiated one of his famous bipartisan compromises. But that will be hard to square with his months of insistence that his original plan was "just right." And Democrats will be able to argue that Bush compromised only when he failed to strong-arm the Senate the way he did the House.

If Democrats succeed in rolling back rate cuts for the wealthy and returning more money to middle-income taxpayers, they can claim that "their" tax cut passed after all. If so, they'll have an excellent campaign issue for 2002. And Daschle, who does not discourage growing talk of a run for president, will have one for 2004. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

A Strain and a Relief

JULIA ROBERTS IS lucky. In less than a decade she has become one of the most successful current stars, and she did it despite the fact that, though she had some smashing hits, she made some dismal flops. Among the hits: *Pretty Woman*, *My Best Friend's Wedding*, *Notting Hill*, and *Erin Brockovich*, all of which advanced her charms. But she also made such disasters as *Sleeping with the Enemy* and *Mary Reilly* and *Runaway Bride*, whose effect on one male viewer was the urge to ride to her rescue and liberate her from those plots. Despite these misadventures, however, she has remained on top.

I hope her luck continues, because now comes the real test. **The Mexican** (DreamWorks) has a screenplay—by J. H. Wyman—which contends for that always elusive prize, the worst ever written. For a big-budget film, anyway. If Roberts's appeal survives this picture, then heaven really smiles on her. Not only is the story clumsy and incredible, but—what is truly surprising—her role is terrible. In fact, she has no role: she just has a lot of scenes and antics and talk. The writer and the director were so strained to keep her part interesting that they sent her to the toilet three times. While we watch. It's disgraceful. It's not the impropriety that bothers (not at this late date) but the desperation to zing things up. All that's missing—and it may come—is a headline in the picture's ads: "Julia Roberts Pees!"

Her co-star is Brad Pitt, who at least has something of a role. Pitt's character is active in some ways, whereas with Roberts, Wyman had to think of material to keep her busy while Pitt did what he had to do. There is another plus for Pitt: he continues to flex as an actor. In his earliest big roles he was plunked at the public so tagged and bundled as a sex object that he seemed a studio product instead of a person. But he shucked the packaging very quickly and has since appeared as, among others, an IRA conspirator, a German explorer, and a Welsh gypsy. His present role—a sort of utility man for some clever crooks—isn't exactly a challenge, but he gives it vitality and even some wit.

The film's title refers not to a person but to a valuable silver-inlaid pistol that was made in Mexico a century ago. Various crooks are tussling to get hold of the pistol, and Pitt, who is shown to be a bit of a bungler, is sent down to Mexico by one of the crooks to get it. Interwoven with this present-day action are several versions of events a century ago that gave the pistol its reputation. All these versions are shot in a different tone from the Pitt-Roberts story, which only emphasizes that they are tedious padding.

At the start, Roberts and Pitt, who have been living together in Los Angeles, have a fierce quarrel, the sort of movie quarrel that guarantees they will get together at the end. He goes off on his quest; she is kidnapped en route to her dream city, Las Vegas, and is held as hostage against Pitt's delivery of the pistol to her abductor. Her kidnapper is James Gandolfini of *The Sopranos*, who here plays still another supposedly sympathetic professional killer. (Further to fill out the requisite screen time for an A-list picture, his character is gay and has an affair with consequences that have nothing to do with anything that the picture is presumably about.) Those who are impressed by Gandolfini on television will be equally impressed here.

The biggest suspense in *The Mexican* comes from wondering why it was made. Lots of film scripts fizzle, far more than those that succeed; but very few "major" scripts are so clearly doomed as this one. (Well, there was the recent Robert Redford sinkhole, *The Legend of Bagger Vance*.) Yet there was a director (previously unknown to me) and a squadron of producers who thought that this screenplay had fun and profit in it. William Goldman, an experienced Hollywood hand, once made a comment on Hollywood that is now much quoted: "Nobody knows anything." But surely even ignorance must have limits.

In any case, may Julia Roberts, even with her weak judgment of material, survive this catastrophe.

A Brazilian film, **Me You Them** (Sony Pictures Classics), is so different from *The Mexican* in every way that it might almost have been designed as a contrast. The leading woman has no pulchritude, only talent; the plot is simply a series of domestic events; the intent is not to wow us but to give us the flavor of some people's lives.

The place is northeastern Brazil, a region that seems principally concerned with the raising of goats and of sugar cane. The skies are beautiful; but very little else is. At the start a young woman named Darlene, in a late stage of pregnancy, leaves her impoverished home, as her weary mother hopes that she never comes back but at least has a son. Darlene is left in the lurch when her groom never appears at the altar; she throws away her veil and gets a lift on a truck.

Three years later she returns with her boy on the day of her mother's funeral, and she takes over the house. In time the middle-aged owner of the house, whose chief occupation is to lie in a hammock and listen to his transistor radio, persuades her to marry him. Subsequently she has three more sons, each with a different father (none of whom is her husband). No one seems particularly disturbed by this, least of all the husband. Largely the course of the film is a series of adjustments to things that happen, rather than a struggle with them.

The odd and appealing quality of the picture is that, for all the varied couplings and consequences, it has no air of lubricity, only of good feeling. We are shown a group of people, one woman and several men, for whom morality is apparently a matter of daily choices, not of overriding precepts. If one lives considerately and generously, they seem to say, one lives morally. And the film doesn't even overtly promote this idea: this belief is just what happens in it.

I doubt that Elena Soaréz, who wrote the screenplay, and Andrucha Waddington, who directed, are maintaining that this is the way that women usually live in this region, simply that it is far from impossible. The film *enjoys* the characters of these people and their accommodation of stricture to circumstance. The cast helps tremendously. Regina Casé gives easy womanliness to Darlene; Lima Duarte is gruffly concerned as her husband; Stênio Garcia and Luís Carlos Vasconcelos are congenial as the two other resident men. Breno Silveira's cinematography makes the most of the varying kinds of light, the sunrises and sunsets, the blistering midday glare, the intimacies of lamplight. With Waddington's help, all of the people involved give us a gently insinuating folk tale.

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Just arrived. Here is the 2001 edition of the *Variety International Film Guide*, the annual edited by Peter Cowie (Silman-James Press, 416 pp., $23.95). Once again this very useful handbook provides, along with information about film festivals and bookshops and schools and archives, a large section of reports from 70 film-making countries around the world. These reports vary in length, naturally, according to a country's measure of activity; still, where else can you learn (as I was glad to) that a director of talent has emerged in Benin, or that "Morocco has the only coherent system of state support for film-makers in North Africa"? ■

Homo Scriblerus

By FRANK KERMODE

Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books by H. J. Jackson

(Yale University Press, 324 pp., $27.95)

A CERTAIN CAMBRIDGE classics teacher named Walter Whiter suddenly became fairly famous when a peculiar book of his, *A Specimen of a Commentary on Shakespeare*, originally published and scorned in 1794, was rediscovered and for a while admired in the twentieth century. The brief vogue of the *Specimen* prompted some research into its author, so we know that Whiter was for some years the close friend of Richard Porson, the great Greek scholar. Porson would go into Whiter's rooms, open a book, find a pen, and write notes in the margin. There is no indication that Whiter minded his doing so; presumably he thought that the comments of so great a scholar enhanced the value of the book that he defaced.

This is not the way we feel about the anonymous scribblers who, in defiance of repeated injunctions and severe but unenforceable penalties, insert their observations in the margins of library books. I once found, in a university library, a copy of Wordsworth's *Prelude* in which the editor, in a rare flight of fancy, remarked in his preface that he detected "celestial ichor" running through the poem's veins. A reader had corrected this (in ink) to read "celestial choir," a conjecture lacking the plausibility of those by Porson—not an enhancement, but a defacement.

I happened on the Whiter anecdote at the moment when H. J. Jackson's book arrived on my desk. She is a distinguished student and editor of Coleridge, who not only wrote thousands of marginalia but actually gave the word currency. But Coleridge's marginalia are a special case: he cultivated the genre as a professional. Jackson fell to thinking about the subject more generally, and then to exploring it with remarkable persistence. The practice of such annotation has a long history. The purpose of the present book is to describe that history, to classify and to exemplify different types of marginalia, and to urge librarians, bibliographers, booksellers and general readers to take a keener interest in them.

Obviously there are a great many marginalia that are of no interest at all, and may be a source of annoyance—such as the library book that I have just mentioned, or those that we nowadays find everywhere, ruthlessly highlighted by students and perhaps bearing a few words of commendation or disagreement, or a few vengeful insults directed at teachers. Sometimes there may be only an amazed exclamation mark (perhaps a series of them), or a skeptical query, or a vertical line beside a paragraph. But at the other end of the scale are the likes of Walpole inscribing his privileged information in the margins, or Gibbon marking up Herodotus, or Keats glossing Milton.

Even those instances of the great commenting on the great are not always unproblematic. Are the comments really that interesting, or do we find them so simply because they are made by famous hands? Jackson has examined a huge collection of marginalia, by unknown readers as well as celebrities, and can find reasons for thinking much of it worth the trouble. In the course of explaining how the practice caught on, and how its aims altered with the passage of time, she has a lot to say about the way people used to read, and about how they read now.

JACKSON IS NOT much interested in workaday marginal marks by reviewers (nor are her publishers, who leave little room for them), but she is willing to consider examples that are really no more than extensions of a claim to ownership. The signature may be augmented, for example, as by Stephen Dedalus in his geography textbook:

> Stephen Dedalus
> Class of Elements
> Clongowes Wood College
> Sallins
> County Kildare
> Ireland
> Europe
> The World
> The Universe

On the opposite page another hand, that of Stephen's schoolfellow Fleming, inscribed a poem:

> Stephen Dedalus is my name,
> Ireland is my nation.
> Clongowes is my dwellingplace
> And heaven my expectation.

(This addition, unlike Porson's, was presumably made without the owner's consent.)

Some scribblers will explain why and where the book was bought, and issue admonitions to borrowers or others into whose hands it may fall: "If this book should chance to roam, box its ears and send it home" to so-and-so, or some more grown-up request of that kind. More serious annotators will gloss words in the text that they have had to look up. Some make a private index of passages that have attracted their own remarks, and may record a more ample critical judgment on the blank paper of a flyleaf. These are likely to be annotators of the scrupulous type, and use ink only if they own the book and pencil if they do not own it (or if, as was sometimes Coleridge's problem, the paper is so absorbent that ink forms an illegible blur).

Jackson seems surprised that such private indexes can sometimes appear at the beginning rather than at the end of a book, but this is only another form of the atavism that she recognizes as characteristic of marginalia generally. These manuscript additions descend from ancient

FRANK KERMODE is the author, most recently, of *Shakespeare's Language* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux).

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practice: the marginal annotation of texts in pre-printing ages, which was then imitated by the earliest printers. The index at the front was a common feature of such books. Iago had such indexes in mind when he called Cassio's courtesy "an index and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts."

The practice had changed by the time of Swift, who derided scholars who make a show of learning by getting "a thorough insight into the index, by which the whole book is governed and turned, like a fish by the tail." Fashions in learned publication went on evolving, as when the footnote began to replace the printed marginal comment; and when the endnote later ousted the expensively double-set footnote, to the great detriment of scholarship. And now that modern printing can provide footnotes on the page with little extra expense, we may hope for the end of endnotes, though Jackson's publishers do not seem to have made this great leap forward, or backward.

The point is that all these meta-textual interventions, including marginalia, have a long and continuous history. According to Jackson, the manuscript marginal note reached its apogee in the eighteenth century. Before that there were plenty of printed marginalia, and owners who did not have bookplates inscribed their names, sometimes with other information; but personal responses or arguments were hard to find. Some years ago a copy of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* was found with inked marginal comments, in which the writer had tried to interpret figures in the poem as allegorical allusions to Elizabethan notables, but was disappointingly less good at this game than later scholars, though the notes do *say something* about the way contemporaries went about reading the poem. Jackson plausibly claims that there is little of interest in this line before 1700.

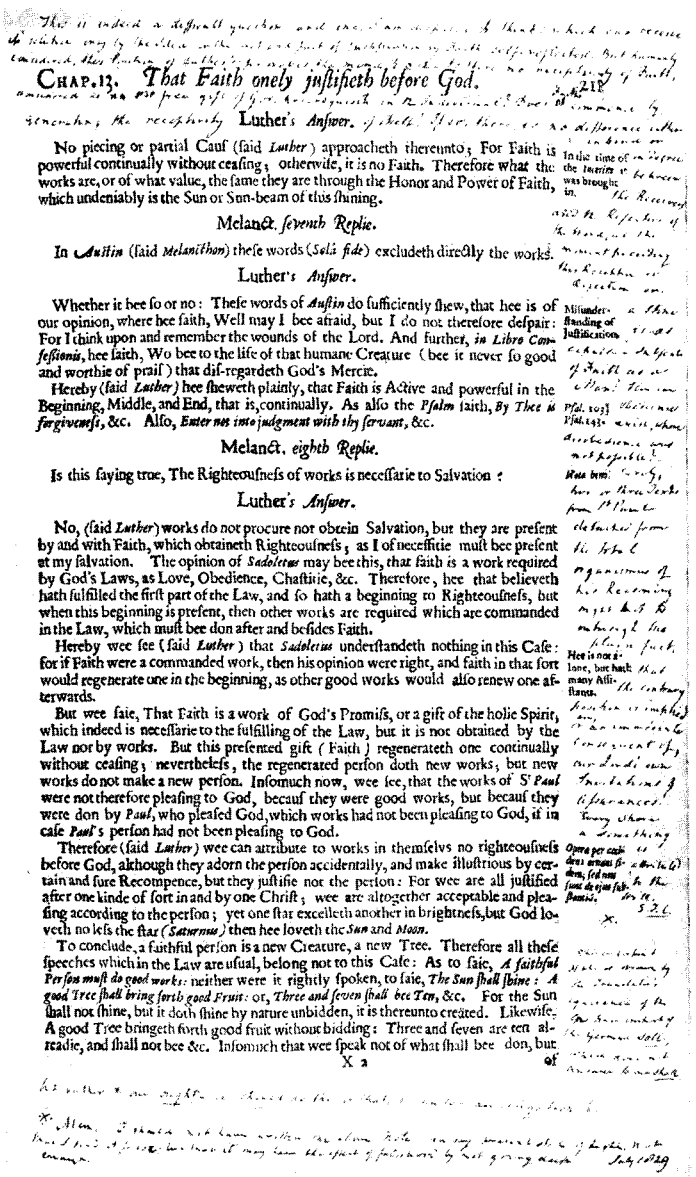
The eighteenth century is another matter. Books were cheaper, and the growth of the practice of annotation probably coincides with a large increase in private ownership. The notes, as Jackson says, became at once more private and more public. Their authors used them for purposes of self-expression, but quite expected them to be read by eyes other than their own. They particularly solicited the attention of friends, who would sympathize with the personal tone while also constituting a small admiring public.

Reading was then, and remained until the early twentieth century, a more social activity than it is now. Women would read to a feminine family group, while their auditors worked at embroidery or the like. And communication might be kept up at a distance, with books given as presents and containing poems ("lines written on a blank leaf" and so on). Jackson quotes several such titles, giving the prize for long-windedness to the title of a poem by Robert Burns: "Written on the Blank Leaf of a Copy of the Last Edition of My Poems, Presented to the Lady Whom, in so Many Fictitious Reveries of Passion, but with the Most Ardent Sentiments of Real Friendship, I Have so often Sung under the Name of Chloris."

Not all manuscript additions were so cordial. Sometimes they could be critical or even vengeful ("innumerable blunders and misconceptions ... unparalleled insolence and stupidity"), though on these occasions the annotator may just be talking to himself or herself, like Blake in his mostly rude notes on Reynolds's *Discourses*, written long after that author was dead. This may be the case even when the reader appears to be addressing the author directly, as when John Horne Tooke writes in a boring book, "This, Bishop, is really extremely *interesting*."

The tendency on the part of solitary readers to express contempt, disagreement, or approval when all they can do is nag a pile of paper is psychologically curious. In extreme forms, it can be obsessional. Fanatical orderliness may be thought a benevolent form of obsession, as in the case of systematic notation of the kind Gladstone went in for: a plan that provided him with serious aids to memory and self-improvement. But there are wilder varieties. Jackson, who enjoys herself throughout (writing, as it were, extensive marginalia on her collection of marginalia), calls Richard Clark, who "extra-illustrated" his own book on Handel, and adorned the books of others with crazed commentary, a "nutter," surely a most unprofessorial expression.

"Extra-illustration"—or "grangerizing"—in the manner of Clark was a practice liable to induce mania. The second of those terms derives from James Granger, an eighteenth-century cleric who made catalogues of portraits, which the purchaser could adorn with reproductions of the portraits. This is not strictly the same kind of intervention as writing marginalia, and Jackson disapproves of the practice, for the inserts are often cut out of other books. But disapproval of bookish vandalism does not destroy her interest in grangerizing, or reduce her anecdotal zest. She tells how Queen Charlotte, the wife of George III, grangerized the autobiography of the



CHAP. 13. *That Faith onely justifieth before God.*

Luther's *Answer.*

No piecing or partial Cauſe (ſaid *Luther*) approacheth thereunto; For Faith is powerful continually without ceaſing; otherwiſe, it is no Faith. Therefore what the works are, or of what value, the ſame they are through the Honor and Power of Faith, which undeniably is the Sun or Sun-beam of this ſhining.

Melanct. *ſeventh Replie.*

In *Auſtin* (ſaid *Melanithon*) theſe words (*Sola fide*) excludeth directly the works.

Luther's *Answer.*

Whether it bee ſo or no: Theſe words of *Auſtin* do ſufficiently ſhew, that hee is of our opinion, where hee ſaith, Well may I bee afraid, but I do not therefore deſpair: For I think upon and remember the wounds of the Lord. And further, *in Libro Confeſſionis*, hee ſaith, Wo bee to the life of that humane Creature (bee it never ſo good and worthie of praiſ) that diſ-regardeth God's Mercie.

Hereby (ſaid *Luther*) hee ſheweth plainly, that Faith is Active and powerful in the Beginning, Middle, and End, that is, continually. As alſo the *Pſalm* ſaith, *By Thee is forgiveneſs*, &c. Alſo, *Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant*, &c.

Melanct. *eighth Replie.*

Is this ſaying true, The Righteouſneſs of works is neceſſarie to Salvation?

Luther's *Answer.*

No, (ſaid *Luther*) works do not procure nor obtain Salvation, but they are preſent by and with Faith, which obtaineth Righteouſneſs; as I of neceſſitie muſt bee preſent at my ſalvation. The opinion of *Sadoletus* may bee this, that faith is a work required by God's Laws, as Love, Obedience, Chaſtitie, &c. Therefore, hee that believeth hath fulfilled the firſt part of the Law, and ſo hath a beginning to Righteouſneſs, but when this beginning is preſent, then other works are required which are commanded in the Law, which muſt bee don after and beſides Faith.

Hereby wee ſee (ſaid *Luther*) that *Sadoletus* underſtandeth nothing in this Caſe: for if Faith were a commanded work, then his opinion were right, and faith in that ſort would regenerate one in the beginning, as other good works would alſo renew one afterwards.

But wee ſaie, That Faith is a work of God's Promiſs, or a gift of the holie Spirit, which indeed is neceſſarie to the fulfilling of the Law, but it is not obtained by the Law nor by works. But this preſented gift (Faith) regenerateth one continually without ceaſing; nevertheleſs, the regenerated perſon doth new works, but new works do not make a new perſon. Inſomuch now, wee ſee, that the works of S. *Paul* were not therefore pleaſing to God, becauſ they were good works, but becauſ they were don by *Paul*, who pleaſed God, which works had not been pleaſing to God, if in caſe *Paul*'s perſon had not been pleaſing to God.

Therefore (ſaid *Luther*) wee can attribute to works in themſelvs no righteouſneſs before God, although they adorn the perſon accidentally, and make illuſtrious by certain and ſure Recompence, but they juſtifie not the perſon: For wee are all juſtified after one kinde of ſort in and by one Chriſt; wee are altogether acceptable and pleaſing according to the perſon; yet one ſtar excelleth another in brightneſs, but God loveth no leſs the ſtar (*Saturnus*) then hee loveth the *Sun* and *Moon*.

To conclude, a faithful perſon is a new Creature, a new Tree. Therefore all theſe ſpeeches which in the Law are uſual, belong not to this Caſe: As to ſaie, *A faithful Perſon muſt do good works*: neither were it rightly ſpoken, to ſaie, *The Sun ſhall ſhine: A good Tree ſhall bring forth good Fruit*: or, *Three and ſeven ſhall bee Ten*, &c. For the Sun ſhall not ſhine, but it doth ſhine by nature unbidden, it is thereunto created. Likewiſe. A good Tree bringeth forth good fruit without bidding: Three and ſeven are ten alreadie, and ſhall not bee &c. Inſomuch that wee ſpeak not of what ſhall bee don, but

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Coleridge's marginalia on Martin Luther's "Colloquia Mensalia" (1652)

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actor Colley Cibber, first inlaying its octavo pages in folios and then binding in the queen's eclectic selection of prints, here affectionately described.

JACKSON ALSO OFFERS extended studies of marginalists—of Coleridge, for example, and of a reader who annotated Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. The second of these cases is the more interesting, not just because the case of Coleridge is better known, but because Jackson, indefatigable researcher that she is (few would want to examine 386 copies of Boswell's book!), has found out who the man was. Hester Lynch Piozzi annotated two copies of Boswell's *Life*, drawing on her long but ill-fated friendship with Johnson, and actually had her notes published separately. Keats's friend Leigh Hunt also put in some hard work on his copy. But "Scriblerus," as Jackson's favorite called himself, did far more. His copy of Boswell, now in the British Library in London, contains copious notes on spacious margins, the notes being rather hostile in tone. They occur on almost every page of the book, and were written at intervals through the 1790s.

The samples of Scriblerus that we have here fall a bit short of fascinating, even when he is scolding Boswell ("Bozzy, Thou art an absolute Idiot to print this"), but he comes through as a man of quality, self-assurance, and considerable learning; and he appears to have been a friend of members of Johnson's circle, of Burke, Goldsmith, Burney, Garrick, and Reynolds. He seems to have been about the same age as Johnson. Craftily delaying her revelation, Jackson introduces some manuscripts, also in the British Library, that are in the same hand as the annotations to Boswell, and finally she unveils Scriblerus as Fulke Greville—not the famous Elizabethan poet and biographer of Philip Sidney, but a less gifted descendant whose identity Jackson has now revealed. Greville sent his annotated volumes to Boswell, who, not surprisingly, ignored them.

Another marginalist accorded a profile in Jackson's book is T. H. White, author of *The Once and Future King* and of a less famous but marvelous book called *The Goshawk*, which describes how he trained a hawk the very hard way, with the aid of an Elizabethan treatise on the subject, being unaware that more modern and less exacting methods were available. White was educated at Cambridge, and Jackson seems to think that this circumstance, along with the coldness of his mother, explains his "troubled sexuality"; she describes Cambridge as a university in which "homosexuality (for men) was accepted, if not actually mandatory." (Here I inserted two exclamation points in the margin of my copy.)

White annotated C. J. Jung's *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* (and wrote a private index), arguing with Jung's text and making glancing allusions to Freud and Adler. When Jung outlines Freud's theory of dreams, White marks the passage "Read this repeatedly." A longer note, consigned to the back of the book, is an extraordinary experiment in free association, apparently alluding to White's own Oedipus complex. "I tried to die of dysentery. Wine. Dis-entry. De sentry. To die of dis-entry. Failure to enter." And so on. It seems that Jung and Freud prompted White to free-associate rather than to comment directly. Reading them had simply got him going, and all this tormented verbiage just happened to occur while he had the book at hand. The passage drifts weirdly towards Joyce at the end, and Jackson takes a lot of trouble over its interpretation, but the main effect of it on me was slightly to increase my respect for *Finnegans Wake*.

MY RESPECT FOR Jackson is measureless. Only rarely do the margins of her own book bear such comments as "Surely not!" and "Non sequitur?" One such disagreement I will allow myself: she says of Coleridge that "since he never acquired professional qualifications for the church or the university and struggled all his life to earn a living as a writer and occasional lecturer, he had plenty of time and incentive to read widely." Well-known professors, with access to generous foundations, long vacations, highly favorable leave arrangements, and good pension prospects are, it is here suggested, far more pressed for time to read than a freelance literary journalist who, as the author of the remark admits, has to struggle all his life to earn a living. As far as I know, it never occurred to Coleridge to apply for a job at Cambridge, his old university. Cambridge was somnolently going through a bad patch at the time, and maybe that was his reason; or perhaps he thought that the place would trouble his sexuality, if it had not already done so. Certainly something did.

Who are the best marginalists? It is a question that Jackson naturally considers. She takes a good look at Horace Walpole, writing marginal memoranda for himself and "corrigenda for posterity," but she concludes that his notes are not "personally revealing," and his main aim is to enhance his own reputation as a know-it-all. He is witty, sometimes funny, sometimes malicious, but one is "suspicious of his motives" as a marginalist. He cannot be thought a prince among annotators.

There are certain conditions that must

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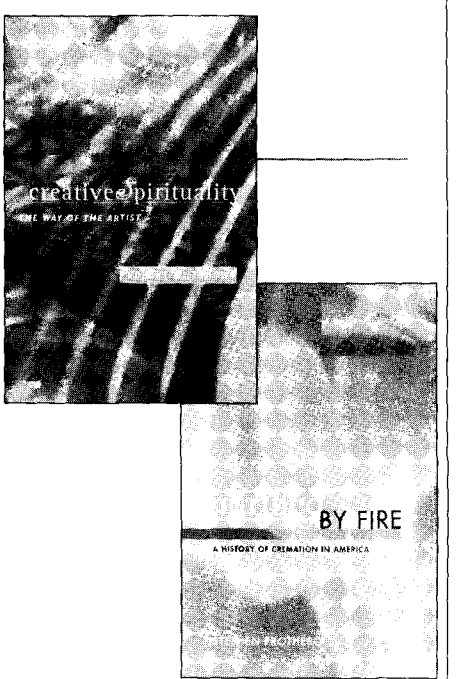

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be met by anybody hoping to be considered for that honor. "The author and the annotator might be a good fit intellectually," Jackson rules, "... or they might be contemporaries with comparable social backgrounds; or they might be experts in the same field. The common features themselves are less important than the ends that common features are expected to achieve, namely a competent and fair reading, or what Coleridge called 'genial' criticism—criticism written in the spirit of the original." Who answers these requirements? Gibbon, perhaps. His notes, like Keats's, exhibit what is here called "creative symbiosis": both parties, author and commentator, are changed by the encounter.

Jackson also mentions for praise Northrop Frye's notes on Bunyan and notes in two copies of Marianne Moore's *Selected Poems* (1935), though the ones that she adduces are not impressive, being mostly unargued commendations. She is a little worried that the most admired marginalia should be by such famous commentators, and to compensate for this elitism her book is crammed with instances of the work of less illustrious persons. Yet these examples, she suggests, are the merest sampling. If we all made an effort, we could greatly improve our knowledge of marginalia, and go deeper into the social and psychological conditions that favor their production. In this way we could contribute to the fashionable academic preoccupation with the history of reading. The qualities for which we should be looking are intelligibility, relevance, honesty, "certified expertise," information that will help a later reader to make better judgments, and a good "symbiotic" match between the two parties.

In an afterword, Jackson pleads for a reformation in our ways of dealing with marginalia. Access to them must be facilitated. They must be zealously preserved. Catalogues should indicate their presence. Different types of marginalia should be registered, and bibliographers are urged not to neglect them. Given a choice, one should always use an annotated copy. Thought should be given to the question of how these glosses can best be published, with special care taken not to give them the appearance of taking precedence over the original text. Publishers also should bear in mind the needs of annotators, though Jackson here adds that small margins do not deter them—a remark that surely deserves a marginal query itself. We should share our notes with friends, in the best eighteenth-century manner. If conventional books are going out, never mind: software is available for annotating their electronic successors.

Jackson thinks of almost everything. Perhaps some foundation will fund an enormous scholarly program on marginalia, with a team under her efficient direction. Or perhaps it can be done better by hard-reading freelance reviewers and lecturers. Whatever the future holds, we can say with confidence that Jackson's *Marginalia* has done for marginalia what Anthony Grafton's *The Footnote* did for footnotes. Henceforth we should all take a more informed interest in the scribbles that we find inside many battered books. The scribbles may be riches. ■

Citizens, immigrants, philosophers.

Alien Nation

By Alan Wolfe

I.

Of all the goods that people value, citizenship has been the most unfairly distributed. Moral philosophers propose various criteria for deciding who should obtain the best that life has to offer. The most just decisions, we are told, are those chosen behind a veil of ignorance, or taken when supply and demand are in equilibrium, or selected to reward the deserving. But citizenship routinely fails all such tests. It is usually conferred at birth, and under most circumstances it stays with you whether or not you lead a meritorious life. Except for the naturalized, and for them only the first generation, citizenship is due not to any decision you made, but to decisions made by your ancestors, up to and including your parents. If you are born in a society for which membership is in high demand, such as the United States, then you are unlikely to give up its associated benefits merely because a Rawlsian could prove to you that, were you to make a choice without knowing where you would end up, you would have opted for a fairer distributive scheme.

It is true that those who are not born American citizens are nonetheless born citizens of some other country. Yet this merely underscores the arbitrariness involved, for not all citizenships are equal. In some cases, citizenship can be a burden, entailing excessive costs in taxation, loss of liberty, or adherence to stifling ethnic obligations. In the United States, citizenship is one of the world's greatest bargains, offering at relatively low cost the freedom to lead a life of one's own choice or the opportunity to keep the bulk of one's own fortune. Not only is the distribution of citizenship unjust, it is also irrational. No transaction that comes with such a cheap price should offer so many rewards. From an economic standpoint as well as a moral standpoint, there can be few more unattractive sights than apathetic Californians born on one side of the border turning their backs on hard-working Mexicans born on the other side.

Inter-generational differences multiply the inequities of citizenship. States grant citizenship, and states are formed through

Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship
by Will Kymlicka
(Oxford University Press, 240 pp., $18.95)

Culture, Citizenship, and Community: A Contextual Exploration of Justice as Evenhandedness
by Joseph H. Carens
(Oxford University Press, 296 pp., $24.95)

Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory
by Bhikhu Parekh
(Harvard University Press, 432 pp., $35)

Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism
by Brian Barry
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by Walter Berns
(University of Chicago Press, 144 pp., $20)

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bloodshed: behind every citizen lies a graveyard. The dead of the Revolutionary War made the American state possible; the dead of the Civil War made the American state powerful. World War I was coterminous with women's suffrage. African Americans did not become full legal citizens until the aftermath of World War II. Thus are citizenship and violence inextricably linked. Once citizenship is created, however, subsequent generations treat it as a right, and usually as a rather casual one. Individuals who pay the highest price to make citizenship possible receive few of its benefits; and those for whom it has become banal receive the most. Having the luck to be born a century or two after your nation-state was created is among life's most precious, and most thoroughly arbitrary, advantages.

MODERN NATIONS HAVE found only one way to eliminate some of the injustices of citizenship: immigration. It does not matter that immigration is sometimes motivated by fears of demographic decline, or a need for more workers, or a desire to increase the tax base to pay for future governmental benefits. When compared to arbitrary criteria based on blood—such as the one that gives people of German descent a greater claim to German citizenship, even if they live outside Germany, than people of Turkish descent who live inside Germany—the relatively open admissions policy that the United States has followed since 1965 is unusually fair. Legally, your chances of becoming an American citizen are by and large independent of the society from which you emigrated. When illegal immigration—which is repeatedly denounced and widely welcomed—is added to the picture, anyone who has the means and the desire has a decent shot at American citizenship, and an excellent chance of American citizenship for their children.

Immigration cannot eliminate all the unfairness of citizenship. Naturalized citizens pay a price not unlike the one paid by the generation that created citizenship through bloodshed. In Canada, the price can be explicitly monetary. In America, the price has usually been cultural: in return for relatively open borders, Americans have usually insisted on rapid and thorough assimilation. It is not just that one has to learn enough history to pass an exam—in itself not a bad idea, and one that ought to be applied to birthright citizens. It is that one inevitably leaves behind the culture of one's upbringing and loses control over the loyalties of one's own children.

Assimilation is a form of symbolic violence. Like the actual violence of war, assimilation is disruptive and heartless, the stuff of tragedy. Old ways of life are allowed to endure as sentimental memories, but as guides for conduct in the new world they are ruthlessly suppressed if they stand in the way of cultural integration. People with faint hearts who do not like hard choices ought not to consider immigration and assimilation.

Still, for all its associated pain and even violence, immigration underscores the value of citizenship, for the native-born and the immigrant alike. By risking life and limb to obtain this dispensation, immigrants remind the native-born why what they take for granted is priceless. And by granting citizenship to people from cultures radically different from their own, the native-born acknowledge that citizenship is too precious to be distributed solely on the basis of luck.

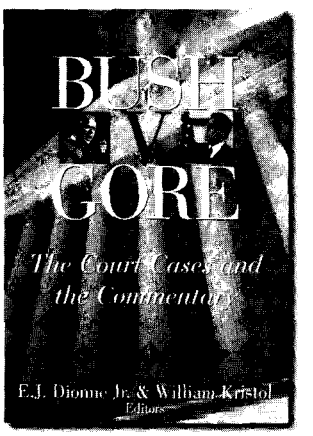
Conceptions of citizenship are changing as the more or less ethnically homogeneous welfare states of North America and Western Europe face ever higher levels of immigrants within their borders. And those borders have become increasingly tenuous as technologies of communication refuse to recognize their existence. Minority groups that once tried to live quietly now demand recognition, if not autonomy. Yet whatever the results of this period of ferment, the lesson is unlikely to be lost that citizenship is one of life's great gifts—unless, that is, one listens to a group of political theorists who, in defense of what they call multiculturalism, would redefine citizenship to the point where it would not be worth much of anything.

II.

THESE POLITICAL THEORISTS begin not with a question to be explored, but with a proposition to be defended. When it comes to citizenship, the basic proposition holds that states ought to respect the minority cultures within their borders. Depending on the theorist, different criteria of justice will be advanced, different minority groups will be considered, and different policies will be advocated. Still, in consonance with an academic discipline strongly influenced by the priorities of the 1960s, the presumption in nearly all of this literature is that an emphasis on patriotism, assimilation, and unity is unjust, and that a celebration of diversity is gloriously the opposite.

Will Kymlicka, a Canadian, is among the most prolific of these political theorists. Since Mill, if not earlier, liberals have worried that attempts to attach rights to groups—particularly ethnic, religious, or linguistic groups who stand for the particular against the universal—would restrict

Equal Protection or Fuzzy Justice?



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the rights of individuals to shape their lives as they choose. In his writings in recent years, Kymlicka has tried to show that such fears are misplaced. Liberals, he maintains, have long recognized that individuals are formed by their group attachments. Moreover, groups want recognition for the same reason that individuals want dignity. Cultural membership, Kymlicka wrote in 1989, "is important in pursuing our essential interests in leading a good life, and so consideration of that membership is an important part of having equal consideration for the interests of each member of the community."

In his new book, as in his previous work, Kymlicka distinguishes between the claims of indigenous people and the claims of immigrants, but he defends the appeals to diversity made by both. Indigenous people—Catalans, Quebecois, Puerto Ricans, Scots—constitute stateless nations. Since they lost out when the European state system came into existence, their desire to strengthen their national identity is at least as just as the desire of any existing state to strengthen its own. Kymlicka does not yet have a theory of how the claims of indigenous minorities ought to be judged, but he does believe that "the burden of proof surely rests on those who would deny national minorities the same powers of nation-building as those which the national majority take for granted."

Immigrants, having voluntarily chosen to move to a new society, have no such presupposition in favor of national identity. But, Kymlicka adds, this is not something they seek. He argues that nearly all the policies demanded by immigrants—from affirmative action to official recognition of religious holidays and customs to laws against hate crimes—"are intended precisely to make it easier for the members of immigrant groups to participate within the mainstream institutions of the existing society." Those who worry about balkanization—in an unfortunate choice of words, Kymlicka calls such distinguished worriers as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Robert Hughes "incomprehensibly paranoid"—are on the wrong track. It is the rejection of multiculturalist demands for justice that causes balkanization, not the acceptance of them.

By insisting upon a distinction between indigenous minorities and immigrant minorities, Kymlicka adds one more criterion of arbitrariness to the ways in which citizenship is distributed. National minorities have more extensive claims than immigrants, and their claims, in Kymlicka's scheme, supercede those of non-national minorities. That is an odd conclusion. One could make a plausible case that immigrants, because they actively choose to become members of a new society, have a higher claim to justice than those who, born into a national minority, are more passive in their status. But such an argument would base justice on individuals and their actions, not on groups and their characteristics; and so Kymlicka will have none of it.

KYMLICKA'S DISTINCTION IS founded on a desire for justice, but it accomplishes something altogether different. Consider the case of Quebec. It is not enough to let indigenous peoples keep their language among themselves, Kymlicka writes about the demands of the Quebecois for the official recognition of French, for "it is very difficult for languages to survive in modern industrialized societies unless they are used in public life." Since culture empowers individuals, the Quebecois can rightfully "use the same tools that the majority nation uses in its program of nation-building, i.e., standardized public education, official languages, including language requirements for citizenship and government employment." To meet the standard of what Kymlicka calls "ethnocultural justice," Quebec, an indigenous nation, must be allowed to fashion itself as a French society within the rest of Canada.

Since Quebec is a minority nation, it has the right, under Kymlicka's guidelines, to impose its way of life on those who live within its borders in a way that Canada, because it is a majority nation, cannot. To be sure, both are constrained by internal national minorities: Canada by the Quebecois, and the Quebecois by indigenous people. Yet each may pursue quite different policies with respect to immigrants. When Kymlicka writes of Canada in general, he speaks of the need for "services that are available in the immigrant's mother tongue" and asks that the host society provide "the same degree of respect and accommodation ... that have been traditionally accorded to the majority group's identity." But those are not the kinds of provisions for which the Quebecois have shown much sympathy.

The province follows a restrictive policy that gives priority to French-speaking immigrants. Those who do not speak French were once forbidden from advertising ethnic goods in the languages of the ethnic groups seeking to buy them, though now the use of ethnic languages is permitted so long as French is given pride of place. Anglophone Quebeckers can attend English-language schools, but immigrant Quebeckers, including those from the former colonies of the British empire, cannot attend them. If Kymlicka is correct to assert that only public languages can flourish, then non-French-speaking immigrants to Quebec are second-class citizens. Compared to Quebec, Pete Wilson and Ron Unz would have to be classified as soft on multiculturalism.

None of this ought to be surprising, for Quebec vehemently rejects the multiculturalist label. French culture, in the Quebecois view of these matters, is not one culture among many; it is one of the two founding cultures of Canada. For this reason, Quebec tries to assert its cultural hegemony over immigrants in much the same ways that English-speaking Canada once tried to assert its hegemony over Quebec. Assimilationists, who believe that justice is best served by making immigrants full members of their new societies as rapidly as possible, ought to appreciate Quebec's policies; but it is odd that Kymlicka, the defender of minority cultures, appreciates them as much as he does.

Kymlicka, a self-described liberal, proclaims that "illiberal policies may be required if national minorities are to successfully integrate immigrants." What he says may well be true, but he ought to emphasize, as he does not, the injustices that follow from his prescriptions. If you are a Muslim and can find your way to Toronto or Detroit, your chances of maintaining crucial aspects of your culture—which is essential to your rights, in Kym-

The Appearance of a Painting

I know very well the vocabulary of table talk
The dignity forks and knives dish to charity
Flows like a river from the endless servings of words
pouring out of our mouths
Humanity, a tiny species,
Simplifies under a universe
Burning off into a dump of painted, clay urns

Begging for sustenance through the omens of gods
Creating suspicions between the pages of our texts
And deep valleys of thoughts
So many of them and never an ending

Bei Ling

—translated by Anastasios Kozaitis and Wang Rong

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licka's opinion—are stronger than if you happen to find your way to Montreal.

NO WONDER THAT Kymlicka has been criticized by other political theorists for stressing the differences between national minorities and immigrants. Joseph H. Carens, a Canadian who migrated from the United States in 1985, is such a critic. Kymlicka, he writes in *Culture, Citizenship, and Community*, "has fatally undermined the principled case for policies designed to take the cultural concerns of immigrants (and their descendants) into account." The problem, in Carens's view, is that Kymlicka remains too much of a liberal. His argument that immigrants have chosen to come to a new country, and in that way waived some of their cultural rights, smacks of social contract theory. His insistence that the culture of dominant nations and the culture of indigenous nations are equal owes too much to liberal notions of neutrality between competing conceptions of the good life. Just as liberals in the nineteenth century were often hostile to the claims of particular groups, Kymlicka's lingering liberalism, according to Carens, blinds him to the needs of immigrants to maintain their own culture in the host society.

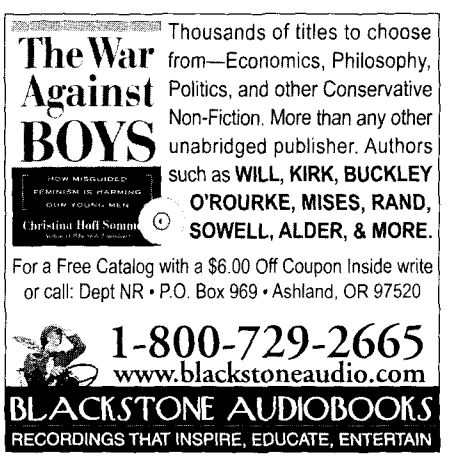
If both immigrant minorities and indigenous minorities have the right to have their culture respected, Carens ought to be critical of the strong assimilationist policies of the Quebecois. But it seems to be characteristic of this type of political theory always to take the side of the underdogs, and from the perspective of an English-speaking Canadian the underdogs are by definition the Quebecois. And so Carens simply joins Kymlicka in double standards by shifting the discussion away from any discussion of principles of justice and toward an argument rooted in the empirical realities of the day. "What is surprising," he writes, "is how little adaptation Quebec expects of immigrants," for although Quebec does insist that they speak French, it is pluralistic with respect to all other aspects of culture. (Even if Carens is right about culture, Quebec's approach to language renders its immigration policy both more restrictive and less universal than that of the United States, a society usually held up in Canada as the very model of injustice). And, Carens continues, bilingualism may seem in theory to be just, but if it were permitted in Quebec it "would lead to the erosion and eventual demise of French." Justice, it would seem, all depends on context: "A language policy that might be unjust in one set of circumstances might be morally permissible in another and even morally required in a third."

In the *Republic*, Thrasymachus tells Socrates that justice is little more than the interests of the stronger. Multiculturalists reverse the formula: justice is whatever works to the advantage of the weaker. The idea here seems to be that the consistent application of principle, when applied to groups unequal in their command over resources, will be unfair to "the potential claims of people who are vulnerable and powerless," as Carens puts it. Critics of multiculturalism dispute the argument; it is precisely those who are most powerless, they claim, who most benefit from policies that are applied universally. As Carens wrestles unsuccessfully with the situation of Quebec, an even more damning indictment of the idea of abandoning principle in favor of powerlessness appears: powerlessness is itself a relative category. The person from Quebec who is more vulnerable than a person from Toronto in predominantly English-speaking North America is more powerful than an English-speaking immigrant from Uganda in Montreal. Taking context into account, as Carens would have us do, would mean changing our standards of justice as frequently as we change our conversation partners.

KYMLICKA APPLIES DIFFERENT standards of justice to different cultures, depending on whether they are majorities or minorities. Carens wants to make justice central to his concerns, but he urges that its stringency should vary according to circumstance. Bhikhu Parekh, a member of the House of Lords and the inspiration behind a widely discussed report on the future of multi-ethnic Britain, wants to move beyond justice altogether. Nearly all societies in Western Europe and North America are now multicultural, Parekh points out. These societies should pursue policies that enable minority cultures to flourish. For this, considerations of justice are necessary but not sufficient. Justice, Parekh writes, "is a cold and impersonal virtue. It prevents accumulation of resentment, frustration, and anger and generates a basic sense of satisfaction with the political community, but does not by itself foster an enthusiastic commitment to and sense of moral and emotional identification with it."

As we move beyond justice, we will also, in Parekh's view, have to move beyond citizenship. Citizenship is about "status and rights." But there is also something called belonging, which "is about being accepted and feeling welcome." Nearly all minorities, even those who become citizens in a legal sense, do not feel that they truly belong to a society such as Great Britain. True, "this feeling of being full citizens and yet outsiders is difficult to analyze and explain," but there are steps the majority can take in response: "Official and unofficial spokesmen of the wider society should publicly welcome the presence and contribution of different cultures, patronize their social and other events, and so forth, and help up their self-confidence."

Parekh does not believe that states such as Great Britain are obligated to accept all the cultural practices of immigrants. He would ban *sati*, the Hindu custom in which a widow joins her dead husband on his funeral pyre, and he believes that female circumcision and polygamy are flawed. When prohibiting immigrant practices, however, the state should proceed cautiously. Restrictions on female circumcision "should be enforced with compassion and sensitivity," and the best way to limit polygamous attitudes is "by attacking the structure of patriarchal authority that generates and nurtures them." Moreover, such bans should only extend to the most extreme customs. Liberals may object to arranged marriages, but Parekh would permit them. "In the Asian view individuals are just an integral part of their family," he declares, "and their lives belong not just to them but also to their families. It therefore makes sense for parents to have a say in who their sons and daughters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marry and how they lead their lives."

How would Parekh treat the efforts by Quebec to restrict the freedom of non-French-speaking immigrants to live as they please? Despite numerous discussions in his book about why Quebec requires autonomy from the rest of Canada, Parekh never once deals with the question of autonomy from Quebec. But he gives a hint. When cultures conflict, "dialogue between them is mutually beneficial.... The dialogue is possible only if each culture accepts others as equal conversation partners." Differences that once led to war can now be solved through sensitivity training. (Parekh does not identify the language in which the momentous dialogue will take place; my guess is that, whatever the rule, it will turn out to be English, making the notion of equality in conversation impossible from the start.)

IT OUGHT TO be clear that Parekh's passionate defense of minority cultures is accompanied by a passionless treatment of culture. Although he grounds his multiculturalism in the ideas of nineteenth-century romantics such as Herder, the emotional side of romanticism is foreign to Parekh's sensibility. Thus he is tone-deaf when it comes to explaining the conflict between Salman Rushdie and Islamic fundamentalists over *The Satanic Verses*. Muslims, he argues, were right to protest the novel, up to and including burning it, but it was "unjustified and unwise" for them to threaten violence. And Rushdie made the mistake of writing his novel in the wrong way. He showed "poor literary judgment" in those passages that Muslims found offensive, and "could easily have handled them in a manner that did not bear such a close historical resemblance to historical Islam."

There is something dangerous afoot when a writer of books seeks to justify book-burning: but once you deny people the right to choose their own marriage partners, restricting what they read is not all that surprising. An even greater danger, though, is letting culture loose in the hopes of controlling its effects. Both Rushdie and his Muslim opponents know, as Parekh evidently does not know, that culture kills.

A multicultural society must have many cultures. Although he fails to appreciate the zeal that culture can inspire, Parekh is nonetheless frightened by the thought of cultural dilution. At one point, he writes that immigrants should have the right to assimilate, if they so choose—but he doubts that they will so choose, for "total assimilation ... requires biological assimilation, and many outsiders are unwilling to pay that price."

In at least one important way—it is probably the most important way—Parekh would prevent immigrants from paying that price. Depending on the ethnic group and the host society, the most common route out of ethnicity has been intermarriage. Parekh, whose concept of culture is as static as it is bloodless, fails to discuss it. Yet his defense of arranged marriage can be read as an indirect assault on intermarriage. After all, one of the reasons that parents insist on arranged marriages is precisely to prevent their children from marrying anyone outside the group.

ONCE A MULTICULTURAL society comes into existence, it would be a multicultural society forever. Ever averse to conflict, Parekh believes that "the dialogically constituted multicultural society both retains the truth of liberalism and goes beyond it. It is committed to both liberalism and multiculturalism, privileges neither, and moderates the logic of one by the other." In his more candid moments, however, Parekh could hardly be more dismissive in his views about the individual rights that liberalism guarantees. "Free speech," he writes in a typical formulation, "is not the only great value, and needs to be balanced against such others as avoidance of needless hurt, social harmony, humane culture, protection of the weak, truthfulness in the public realm, and self-respect and dignity of individual and groups."

Haunting the dreams of multiculturalists is the specter of nativism. As these political theorists understand the world, minorities are inevitably oppressed, and the oppressors are just as inevitably people of European descent who fear, and hence try to control (if not to eliminate), the cultures of people whom they do not understand. In the face of the extensive immigration that they have experienced in the past few decades, nativists in societies such as the United States and Great Britain would really prefer, or so the theorists seem to think, to send immigrants back to their homelands. But so, too, do multiculturalists such as Parekh—not literally, but symbolically. Instead of saying that immigrants would have been better off had they never left their countries of origin, Parekh would have them bring their countries of origin with them. In either case, immigrants would not have to deal with the complexities of living in a liberal democratic society, and residents of a liberal democratic society would not gain from immigrants the sense that the way they have always done things may not be the best way to do them.

By sealing off immigrants, even after they become citizens, in miniature replicas of the societies that they left, Parekh raises the question of why have immigration at all. Without the capacity to speak freely, to develop their capacities as individuals, and to plan their lives, immigrants might as well stay home (though if they did, they would most likely be poorer). And without exposure to, and integration with, the world's many cultures, natives might as well just close their borders. By moving beyond justice, Parekh leaves the situation in some ways worse than it was when citizenship was determined by place of birth. Your roots are your fate, and nothing you do, not even uprooting yourself, can change your destiny.

III.

BRIAN BARRY HAS written *Culture and Equality* to destroy the ideas of Will Kymlicka, Joseph Carens, Bhikhu Parekh, and some twenty or thirty other political philosophers, a large proportion of them from Canada, who think like they do. A liberal in the mode of Mill, Barry believes that it is the flourishing of individuals, and not the survival of their culture, that makes citizenship worth having. In the take-no-prisoners style of argumentation associated with Oxford philosophy, Barry argues that multiculturalism contributes nothing to the creation of a just society. Indeed, when multiculturalists do discover an injustice in the contemporary world, liberalism is by far the best philosophy for identifying and rectifying it.

Barry's most persuasive point is that multiculturalists start from a fantasy. Liberal citizenship, in their view, grew out of homogeneous societies that shared one vision of the good life—the liberal vision, with its emphasis on secular reason—and it is therefore irrelevant, if not harmful, to a multicultural world in which no one way of life ought to be privileged over any other. Quite the contrary, Barry reminds his readers. Liberalism emerged out of deeply divisive conflicts over the right way to live. It was precisely when European societies came to recognize that religious wars, if allowed to go on forever, would destroy everything worth saving that they imagined the notion of a state capable of appealing to all sides. And the liberal state did this, moreover, not by being neutral, but by being fair.

Of course the liberal state takes sides, Barry contends. It takes sides in the sense that its very rationale assigns a higher priority to fairness than to unfairness. In pursuit of fairness, the impact of liberal procedures falls differently on different groups: insisting that religion be relegated to the private sphere, for example, discriminates against those who prefer to live in a society in which religion is present in the public sphere. All laws favor

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some and disfavor others. Laws against speeding "discriminate" against speeders and "privilege" those who obey the speed limit. Merely showing that a law burdens some more than others cannot, in itself, be taken as an indication that oppression exists.

When people from widely different cultural communities live together within the same borders, many laws passed without any attempt to discriminate will be viewed by some as burdensome. Every political theorist who has ever lived or worked in Great Britain seems to have been exercised by a law requiring hard hats for construction workers (or helmets for motorcyclists). Sikhs wear turbans. Should they be prohibited from doing so if they work in construction, as an astonishingly large number of Sikhs in Britain actually do, or if they drive mopeds? Barry's ruling is this: either a regulation is sensible, in which case it should be applied to all, or it is not sensible, in which case it should apply to none. Both approaches treat everyone equally. Problems arise only when we adopt a "rule and exception approach," one that seeks to retain a general regulation but to allow exceptions to avoid religious or racial discrimination.

Barry would not rule out all efforts at a "rule and exception" approach, but he would set the standard very high before adopting one. If Sikhs can prove that the need for hard hats is exaggerated, then the regulation should be suspended for all. If they claim that keeping the law discriminates against them because of their beliefs, then Barry questions whether their beliefs are quite as inflexible as they are often made out to be. Cultures change, after all, and within any religion or culture some are always more strict in their observance than others. And if Sikhs nonetheless prove that their beliefs are a requirement of their religion, then one can still question whether they need to ride motorcycles. The point is to narrow down the exceptions to as few as possible. When all is said and done, Barry would allow Sikhs already employed in construction the right to wear their turbans, since their livelihood is so clearly tied to that way of life, but not any newly arriving ones seeking jobs in the construction trade.

The case of the Sikhs illustrates how Barry treats citizenship in general. As early as the eighteenth century, liberal society abolished estates and castes in favor of a single status, the status of citizen; and Barry sees no particular reason to abandon the practice. Would this result in the denigration of group rights, as Kymlicka, Parekh, and others charge? It would, Barry replies, if groups were capable of having rights; but groups are not in this way capable. There is something called freedom of association—that people should have the right to join groups (and the right to leave them); and this gives groups a certain autonomy from rules that would curtail their membership. Yet so-called group rights are nothing more or less than individual rights: if an exception were allowed for Sikhs to wear their turbans on the job, it would still be individuals who benefited, not the group to which they belong. And applying the concept of group rights to cultural groups—by claiming, for example, that all cultures are deserving of respect—is illogical and dangerous. If there are no universal standards by which cultures can be judged, how can we judge them all to be deserving? And any insistence on the equal recognition of cultures forces upon a population that insists on making distinctions between them the views of undemocratic elites.

BARRY'S MILITANTLY LIBERAL book is a refreshing alternative to the endless and repetitive books written by political theorists like Kymlicka, Carens, and Parekh, even if the reader (indeed, even if Barry) has to wonder sometimes whether ideas so ill-conceived really deserve such attention. But for all the clear air that Barry leaves behind, his treatment of what citizenship demands is thin and unsatisfactory. Citizenship, after all, is not an individual right in the way that free speech is an individual right. To be a citizen, you must be a member of a collectivity, usually a nation, that has sufficient authority to restrict some of your rights in the interest of strengthening others.

Liberals such as Barry are right to insist that citizenship implies one standard applicable equally to all within a state. But what do we do with the fact of different states? When states exist in various degrees of freedom and coercion, there will be no universal standards of citizenship that transcend all states, as there may be certain basic human rights. And if one responds by saying that in such a case all states should be held to the same standard, then there will be no distinctive states and therefore no specific citizenships worth anything to those who hold them.

Universalistic strains of liberalism find themselves uncomfortable with national citizenship precisely because it exists only when distinctions exist. Barry's commitment to universalistic thinking is so strong that he would seek justice not only for all human beings, but also for other animal species. ("I can see no answer to the moral case for vegetarianism," he remarks.) The result, however admirable from a moral point of view, is a bloodless conception of nationhood strikingly similar to Parekh's bloodless conception of culture.

Never do we get from Barry a sense of why the nation that guarantees citizenship may be worth dying for. Never does Barry evince any appreciation of the symbols of nationhood, and of the fact that to believe in those symbols sometimes means leaving analytical rationality behind in favor of sentimental attachment. In the preface of his book, at the point where an author often locates himself by place, Barry locates himself at "London-Merano-New York," as if to inform the reader that he is a man of the world and thus a citizen of no particular country. And Barry's prose really is placeless. Writing from way on high, he never seems to touch the ground of actually existing societies. And when he does discuss the ideas of those thinkers, such as Michael Walzer, who would develop standards of justice rooted in the traditions of real societies, he loses all patience. "Liberals," he writes, "are universalists ... because everybody in the world is equally entitled to the protections afforded by liberal institutions, whether they actually enjoy them currently or not." To this categorical outburst one can only pose two questions: whose blood and sweat created those institutions? And do they not have a greater claim on them because of what they sacrificed to achieve them?

Same as Usual

The dance of the dream of a silent wild field
We are dying under the tree
We have nothing to tell death
Our language revolts as usual
It twists over again and again

The joy of self-abuse
The joy of our void
Our scared face opens
Naked, prepared to be stamped
With death's dry skin

We have no joy

Bei Ling

—translated by Anastasios Kozaitis and Wang Rong

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IF LEFTISTS AND liberals have difficulty understanding why a robust conception of citizenship requires a robust conception of the nation, can conservatives do better? Walter Berns does better, up to a point. His book is not written, he says, for academic specialists, but at least Berns understands, as so many political theorists do not, how demanding citizenship can be. "No one is born loving his country," he writes wisely; "such love is not natural, but has to be taught or acquired." It follows that "citizenship ... cannot be taken for granted; like patriotism, it has to be cultivated." (So, by the way, does culture, as the word implies. This, too, the multiculturalists fail to grasp.)

The process of making citizens is a process of toil, and it must overcome many obstacles. In America, those obstacles have come neither from immigrants nor from external enemies, but from America's own practices and values. As Berns puts the point: "In theory, this nation began with self-interested men, by nature private men, men naturally endowed not with duties or obligations but with certain unalienable rights ... that each defines for himself, and, again in theory, government is instituted only 'to secure these rights.' So ... why should self-interested men believe it in their interest to give up their lives for the *idea* or *promise* of their country?"

Unfortunately Berns does not offer much of an answer to the important question that he asks. An admirer of commerce, he sees little conflict between the needs of business and the demands of the state. He reminds us of Montesquieu's point that commerce softens morals, thereby permitting private self-interest to serve the public good. He appreciates Hamilton as the founder who most understood America's future as an industrial republic rather than an agrarian one. But neither Berns nor any other American patriot has figured out how to reconcile the love of freedom that is celebrated by American capitalism with the distaste for obligations that follows inexorably in the wake of laissez-faire. This is an especially glaring omission in a book that appears at the beginning of this hyper-capitalist century. The challenge to national citizenship posed by multiculturalism pales before the creation of truly global corporations that put their faith in the bottom line before their love of country.

But it is not just self-interest that stands in the way of effective citizenship. If Christians are commanded to love their God before their country, then they do not always make the most reliable of citizens. Berns notes that the creators of American citizenship did not respond to the power of the church by confiscating its property and killing its priests, as did the revolutionaries in France—but neither did they establish an official religion to guide the affairs of state. Instead they built a secular state, a state that would be guided in its morality by religious belief but would separate the religious realm from the secular realm, and even ensure the domination of the former over the latter.

Berns makes the interesting point that at the time of the founding, most ordinary Americans did not understand, and would not have supported, the kind of state being created in their name. Madison and Jefferson held opinions on faith that were more "advanced" than those of, say, John Witherspoon, Madison's teacher at Princeton, who, as Berns puts it, "saw no conflict ... between the principles set down in the Declaration of Independence and what he understood as orthodox Christianity." All of which suggests that citizenship, which sits uncomfortably with universalistic liberalism, also cannot easily be reconciled with populistic forms of democracy. Without leaders capable of looking beyond yesterday's majority opinion, Americans today might not have been so willing to offer citizenship to Catholics and Jews.

The greatest challenge to citizenship in America came, of course, from the slaveholding South. By insisting on clauses protecting slavery in the Constitution, the Southern states made it possible for Frederick Douglass to ask, in 1847, "What country have I?" His question was not answered until 1868, when, in adopting the Fourteenth Amendment, the United States finally established the principle of national citizenship. But it did not establish the reality of that principle until 1965, when the Voting Rights Act destroyed the last attempts by entrenched local interests to use the official machinery of government to deny citizens their rightful access to government. Berns is insufficiently appreciative of the obstacles to citizenship for black Americans put in place during Reconstruction. And while it is a terrible exaggeration to claim that the Florida vote in 2000 was a replay of Selma, the raw fact is that large numbers of Americans do not always get their votes counted and consider themselves less than full citizens as a result.

IV.

WE USUALLY THINK of rights as pre-political—found in nature or given by God. But citizenship in inherently political. When it exists, it has been created through the conscious actions of people. Natural rights, because they are inherent in us as human beings, are claims against the state. Citizenship rights, by contrast, have to be claimed in conjunction with the state. For realists such as James Madison, it was insufficient to rely on notions of republican virtue to ensure respect for the common good. Men who were not angels could become good citizens only with the help of institutions: the militia, the family, the schools, the churches, and (most importantly, at least as measured by the care that went into the writing of *The Federalist Papers*) a well-designed state.

One reason that citizenship is so problematic for contemporary political theorists is that almost nobody seems to like the state. Indeed, multiculturalists hate it. The state, writes Bhikhu Parekh, "is a deeply homogenizing institution" that "expects all its citizens to subscribe to an identical way of defining themselves and relating to each other and the state," and so we will have to discover "new modes of constituting the modern state and even perhaps altogether new types of political foundation."

Writers opposed to multiculturalism have a stronger sense of what citizenship requires; but they, too, are reluctant to get too cozy with the state. Liberals such as Brian Barry look beyond the nation-state to humanity as a whole. The resulting cosmopolitanism is as naïve as it is hostile to the quite sensible idea of the love of one's country. And the only answer that Walter Berns provides to the dilemma of how a self-interested people can love their country is to cite a speech by Abraham Lincoln in 1864 urging Ohio troops to fight for the struggle to create free government—as if it takes a civil war, and not the ordinary actions of government, to make patriots.

The age of nationalism is not far behind us, so it does not require too much imagination to recall the horrors carried out in the name of the nation-state. Citizenship, as we know from those horrors, cannot be an end in itself; it must serve substantive goals, and those goals, in turn, must respect fundamental human rights. For this reason, multiculturalists and liberals are right to put justice front and center in any discussion of citizenship, no matter how much their views of what justice requires differ. Yet to the degree that we seek justice through citizenship—and, in the absence of world government, there is no other way to seek it—we can do so only by accepting the legitimacy of the liberal state, upholding liberal principles when the state acts illiberally, and insisting on common political objectives when individuals or groups withdraw into self-interest or self-love. ■

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Somebody Else

By MARK POLIZZOTTI

Rimbaud: A Biography by Graham Robb

(W.W. Norton, 552 pp., $35)

Arthur Rimbaud: Presence of an Enigma by Jean-Luc Steinmetz translated by Jon Graham

(Welcome Rain, 464 pp., $35)

WHAT BECOMES A legend most? Contrary to what the old advertisement claimed, not a rich coating of fur and attitude. The naked truth usually reveals a figure to be far more complicated and contoured than the glitzy myth. In the amazing case of Arthur Rimbaud, tall tales have obscured history to the point that each new discovery seems to bring us only further away from the truth. He has aroused so many mad desires, so many ardent projections, that until recently writings about him were more often about his biographers' fantasies than about historical accuracies. Although efforts to penetrate the myth have been a corollary part of Rimbaud studies almost since the beginning, two new biographies by Graham Robb and Jean-Luc Steinmetz provide the most concerted and reasoned attempts so far to think empirically about their subject, and to bring fully into daylight a man who still lives on as an enigma.

These are the well-known facts: Jean-Arthur Rimbaud was born in 1854 in the town of Charleville in eastern France, the son of an absentee father, Frédéric Rimbaud, a career army officer who paid his last brief visit to the family when the boy was six, and a mother whose loveless and narrow-minded discipline has fueled the ire of Rimbaud scholars. As a child, Rimbaud distinguished himself by routinely making a clean sweep of the scholastic prizes, but before long he was rebelling spectacularly against society's and his mother's expectations. He began producing verse of startling originality, fashioning himself a "seer" and coining his famous dictum, "*I* is *Somebody else*."

At seventeen, following several aborted flights from home, he landed in Paris, where he proceeded to dynamite the comparatively staid existence of the city's most avant-garde poets, in particular the recently wed Paul Verlaine, with whom he embarked on a turgid affair. Rimbaud's three years with Verlaine, the most notorious part of his legend, took the couple to Belgium and London, finally ending in a Brussels police station after Verlaine wounded his young lover with a pistol. In the midst of all this, Rimbaud composed many of his works in verse, the bulk of the prose poems later grouped under the title *Illuminations*, and his hallucinatory memoir *A Season in Hell*, virtually his only work to be published with his knowledge.

After his break with Verlaine, Rimbaud more or less stopped writing poetry and spent several years wandering Europe in pursuit of various odd jobs and some meaningful, and ever elusive, definition of happiness. In 1880 he docked at the port of Aden, securing work as a trader for an import-export company. For the next eleven years, he lived in Aden or in Harar, Abyssinia (today Ethiopia), building a career that was relatively lucrative or relatively disastrous, depending on whom you believe, and making several long excursions into uncharted territories, most notably an eighteen-month trek across the desert and back to deliver rifles to Menelik II, king of Shoa. Rimbaud's letters during this period, many of them to his mother, carried dry reports of his commercial activities and requests for supplies, showing just how much he had renounced his former literary activities. Back home, however, his reputation as a poet was beginning to grow, due to Verlaine's publication of his earlier manuscripts. By the time he died of cancer in Marseilles in 1891, at the age of thirty-seven, the myth was well under way.

RIMBAUD'S STORY FITS SO comfortably into certain archetypes that it is hard to imagine it ever being taken strictly on its own terms. There is the legend of the child rebel, beating the establishment at its own game, and then saying goodbye to all that with a one-finger salute. There is the young messiah—or "Satan in the midst of the doctors," as one observer put it—shaking up the stultified world of Parisian letters and leaving a memorable trail of carnage in his wake. There is the ascetic in the desert, purging himself in the unforgiving climate and rigors of the African marketplace. And there is the prodigal son, returning home prematurely to die (with the alleged capper, thanks to his devout younger sister Isabelle, of a deathbed religious conversion).

Still, the reality is larger even than the larger-than-life Rimbaud most of us think we know, as is made abundantly clear by Robb and by Steinmetz. (Robb's book is the first biography in English in sixty years; Steinmetz's book appears in English a decade after its publication in French.) The fact that such a familiar story can still remain so foreign—perhaps the very essence of legend—certainly bespeaks no lack of attempts to get it right once and for all: both of these works boast extensive bibliographies, and by Robb's accounting an average of ten new volumes can be added every year.

For the most part, though, writings about Rimbaud have been riddled with hidden and not-so-hidden agendas. The earliest of these, articles written by his former lover Verlaine while Rimbaud was still trading in darkest Africa, smell freshly of spite and brimstone, and of the self-aggrandizement that comes with having lived in the shadow of an outsized figure. Several years after Rimbaud's death, Paterne Berrichon, the husband of his adoring sister Isabelle and the heir to his literary estate, contributed the first full-length "life of Jean-Arthur Rimbaud," in which he promoted the genius (read: monetary value) of the wunderkind's writings, and also the saint-in-wolf's-clothing view that Isabelle made it her life's mission to impose—a mission that did not preclude excising from the unpublished documents numerous passages that conflicted with her idealized image of her brother.

Her followers, in particular the bullishly Catholic poet Paul Claudel (who was himself guilty of destroying some inconvenient mementos), have dipped into her

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thin evidence to paint Rimbaud as "an angelic mind that was certainly illuminated by heavenly light." Others, such as Elisabeth M. Hanson and the inescapable Enid Starkie, have taken a grandmotherly approach to "poor Arthur," bemoaning his want of parental love and guidance, and pussyfooting around the less savory aspects of his personal dealings (such as his very carnal and very sado-masochistic relations with Verlaine). Still others, following the grand academic tradition in which literature is literature and all the rest is secondary, see the "African" half of Rimbaud's life as a tragic, unimportant, or mystifying coda, a stupendous waste of his gift.

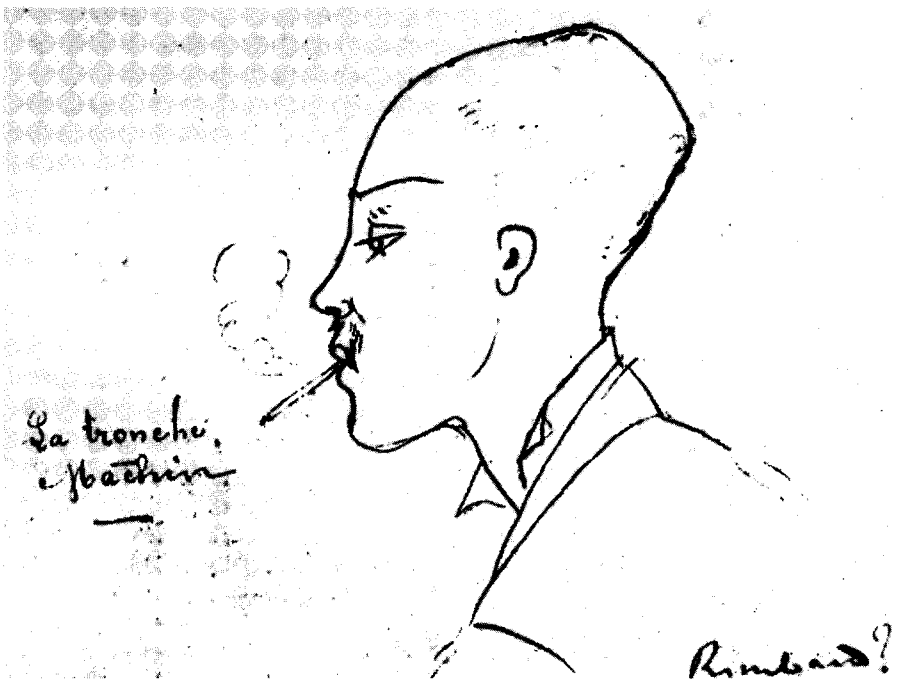
ROBB AND STEINMETZ, following in the wake of such recent studies as Alain Borer's *Rimbaud in Abyssinia* and Charles Nicholl's *Somebody Else: Arthur Rimbaud in Africa 1880–91*, belong to a newer generation that sees Rimbaud's stint as a poet and his career as a trader as a continuation of a single quest. Both have sharp words to say about their predecessors, though Steinmetz seems to maintain a certain (some might say exaggerated) respect for Starkie's *Arthur Rimbaud*, which appeared in 1938 and was until now the only complete biography of the poet-explorer readily available in this country. In the main, they charge, Rimbaud's previous chroniclers have demonstrated a remarkable credulity toward their primary sources (such as taking his casual citation of a Muslim proverb for a conversion to Islam, or Isabelle's say-so as proof of his latent Catholicism), or they have perpetrated a willful distortion of the known facts for tendentious ends. Robb in particular prosecutes such commissions with visible zeal, sometimes to wickedly amusing effect.

But even more than this, both portray Rimbaud as a willing accomplice in his own fate, rather than as a hapless victim of fortune or as the posthumous creation of a myth-machine that has draped him in cloaks of every garish color, from "a veritable god of puberty" (André Breton) to "the first punk poet" (Patti Smith) to "a superior mental degenerate" (Dr. E. Jacquemin-Parlier). "What is most important is to note the manner in which Rimbaud created his own legend," Steinmetz remarks at the outset. "The ring of legends surrounding him were not the accumulation or sedimentation of rumor but the response to his own most heartfelt desire at those times he was grappling with his idealized projections." Robb is even more blunt: "Like all great poets, Rimbaud was a brilliant manipulator ... [with] a keen eye for the needs of the market and a firm grasp of self-advertisement. The memoirs of his classmates show that he already had that combination of theatricality and indifference which tends to create a legend."

The fact is, Rimbaud became a legend for a variety of reasons. He possessed an androgynous physical attractiveness and a talent beyond his years, along with a combination of charm and cruel indifference that many found irresistible. This fatal hybrid of attributes—the bewitching devil-child who wrote like an angel—seems alone to have been enough to fix Rimbaud in people's memories and to trigger the kind of retrospective embroidery with which myths are woven. But Rimbaud also had an unerring instinct for self-promotion and a remarkable capacity to inspire sympathy (no small asset when it came to living off the kindness of strangers). His ability to become "somebody else," somebody other than the brilliant pupil, the promising young talent, or the wasted decadent poet whom people had just gotten used to, made him a constant surprise: Verlaine no doubt spoke more appositely than he knew when he called his former protégé "the man with soles of wind."

And, on top of all this, Rimbaud had a firm sense of his audience. As an adolescent, his unfashionably long hair and his loutish manners courted the predictable outrage of his native Charleville, making him one of the town's best-known figures. To his impressionable friends (some of whom later wrote oft-quoted memoirs) he dictated episodes and asides destined to produce an effect. Even his introductory letter to Verlaine, as Robb cannily suggests, played to its addressee's secret proclivities:

> The blushing novice holding out his begging-bowl to the experienced, older poet is a fairy-tale image. When Rimbaud wrote to Verlaine in early September 1871, he already had a clear picture of his correspondent.... Verlaine's latest poems, *Fêtes galantes*, had a tendentiously over-delicate quality that would now be called "camp."... The earlier *Poèmes saturniens* were full of little hints.... Rimbaud's letter to Verlaine showed that he had been paying attention. The five poems he chose to send him are not simply representative samples of his work. They all have something in common: bottoms and acts of pederasty. The supposedly innocent young poet had put together a highly suggestive anthology for his potential patron.



Ernest Delahaye, sketch of Rimbaud, 1875

But more than anything, Rimbaud became a legend because he lived like a legend. If the stories and the anecdotes that have posthumously defined our idea of him seem rather outsized, in reality they have only pumped more air into a balloon figure that the poet had begun inflating well before his death. What are we to make of someone who by the age of twenty had composed a body of work that is still considered one of the most innovative and significant of the French nineteenth century, an era that produced also Hugo, Baudelaire, and Mallarmé? How can we understand, other than in hyperbolic terms, an

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unknown teenager showing up filthy and lice-ridden and (to paraphrase one contemporary witness) "stinking of genius" at the home of his poetic idol Verlaine, then proceeding to spit on—or, in the case of one infamous prank, masturbate into the milk of—all of the idol's friends, and eventually the submissive idol himself? And how is it possible to downplay his escape, not away from his poetic vocation, which at the time did not seem like very much, not even to Rimbaud himself, but into one of the most grandiose sagas of nineteenth-century European history, the so-called Scramble for Africa?

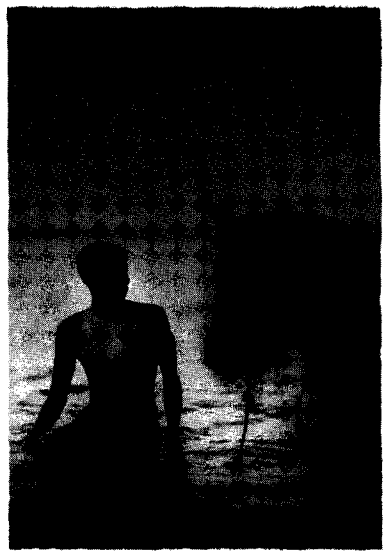
The irony is that Rimbaud sealed his reputation as a poet the moment he chose to pursue his poetic vision by means that had nothing to do with writing. Stories of every color abound: of phenomenal rudeness and sadism during his time with Verlaine, of remarkable capability and integrity during the African years. What holds them together, and gives them their lurid and incandescent hue, is the sense that behind it all a single, and singularly driven, mind was at work. On this score, at least, Robb and Steinmetz seem to be following a common road.

ONCE PAST THESE similarities, however, the differences between the two books are significant. Robb, an independent scholar and the author of biographies of Balzac and Hugo, maintains an appropriately phlegmatic distance from his subject that allows him to question much of the received wisdom about Rimbaud that has accumulated over the past hundred years. Among the encrusted myths that he generally sidesteps are not only the immobilizing ones of official literary culture that set the poet on a pedestal or entomb him in dense scholarly editions, but also the more dynamic and pugnacious ones fostered by Henry Miller, the Surrealists, or the Beats, who greeted Rimbaud's every utterance as a directive from the oracle. Instead Robb tends to take the poet on his own terms, as a bright, charismatic, unfocused, and highly manipulative young man who disrupted a lot of lives while seeking the meaning of his own—less a demonically inspired genius than a superbly talented craftsman who could absorb phenomenal amounts of poetic information and recycle it to marvelous effect. As he reminds us, Rimbaud's famous "*lettre du voyant*," in which he expressed the now canonical notion that the poet "makes himself a *seer* by a long, immense, and rational *derangement* of *all the senses*," contains the word "rational," which was wittingly added by Rimbaud in a subsequent version of the letter. Illumination is not bestowed from above, it is arrived at through work. Wisdom is a process.

Similarly, Robb takes a more acerbic view than his predecessors of Rimbaud's notorious pranks while in Paris, his flouting of convention, social grace, and the most elementary hygiene. To the heroic vagabond who fled his constrictive home at the age of seventeen and took to the open road—a flight carefully documented by Rimbaud in poems that have now entered posterity—Robb counters with the doubtless more accurate image of "a silent, dishevelled and smelly little boy.... After a hundred days in [Paris], Rimbaud was a semi-stagnant eco-system with its own atmosphere and verminous population." And he jabs at the hyperbole that has surrounded the poet's major poetic works: whether the "mad perspectives of the *Illuminations*," which might have been "foreign to French literature but not to nineteenth-century residents of Paddington, Holborn and Southwark," where they were composed; or the picture of Rimbaud in self-imposed isolation, dashing off *A Season in Hell* in an inspired frenzy. In reality, most of the book was composed in his mother's home in Roche, where the poet returned after the messy end of his affair with Verlaine; and as the manuscripts show, it underwent an enormous amount of revision.

"TO THOSE WHO cherish the image of the blaspheming vagrant who deliberately wrecked his career prospects," Robb declares, "this is the unacceptable face of Arthur Rimbaud: an ambitious young writer who repeatedly returned to live with his mother and often induced her to interfere with his life." With the bracken of overstatement cleared away, what emerges is a more realistic, and in many ways a more persuasive, list of reasons for appreciating Rimbaud's poetry. The freewheeling liberties that Rimbaud took with language, his seemingly nonsensical imagery, and his frequent borrowings from others' poems (what today would be called "sampling") make him a precursor of Surrealism and the Beats. His interest in scientific principles as a basis for literature foreshadows the work of Oulipo writers such as Georges Perec. And his explorations of a form of verse without rhyme or meter, "fifteen years before the *vers libre* made its official appearance in French literature," can be likened, in Robb's phrase, to "artistic vandalism." More than anything, it was the insolence of Rimbaud's literary mind that paved the way for much of what came in the century after him.

In a similar vein, Robb attacks the myths buttressing the story of Rimbaud's African exile, the first of these being that Rimbaud had willfully turned his back on



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poetry after reaching impossible heights (the version propounded by Breton and his colleagues) or that he had stopped writing out of spite after *A Season in Hell* did not bring the desired success. Instead, says Robb, Rimbaud was simply swapping one tool for another: "For Rimbaud, poetry had always been the means to an end: winning esteem, causing irritation, changing the nature of reality. Each redefinition of the goal had rendered the old technology obsolete. The prose Rimbaud had shown no more nostalgia for verse than most mathematicians showed for their slide-rules after the invention of the personal computer."

Writing was an adventure for Rimbaud, a means of traveling without the wherewithal, a way of becoming somebody else, an escape hatch. A foreign posting simply provided a more direct route than pen and paper ever had—though even this was not without its drawbacks. Robb quotes a letter of Rimbaud's written ten years after his final poem: "If I had the means to travel without being forced to stay and work for a living, I'd never be seen in the same place for more than two months. The world is very big and full of magnificent lands that would take more than a thousand lives to visit."

THE SECOND AND most prevalent myth of Rimbaud's African years is that his commercial ventures all ended in failure. It is true that Rimbaud was not a stellar merchant, if one measures success in financial terms (as he himself often did). His various get-rich-quick schemes generally yielded disappointing results, and his holdings when he finally left the Dark Continent fell short of the huge nest egg evoked in his letters like a vision of Valhalla. At the same time, Rimbaud did establish himself in the region as an influential figure, one who commanded the esteem of seasoned fellow traders and explorers and who enjoyed the friendship of such potentates as Menelik's deputy Ras Makonnen, the father of Haile Selassie.

The depressive drone of his letters from Africa—"If poetry had been an intoxication," Robb writes in one of the pithy phrases that pepper his book, these letters were "the diet of a recovering alcoholic"—has less to do with the reality of his situation than with his constitutional discontent. Incident after incident shows Rimbaud to have been a relatively shrewd and savvy entrepreneur, as well as a reliable, resourceful, and witty companion, capable of adapting to life in a desert village just as he had adapted to the jungle of Parisian literary politics. "The grim profiteer, seething with frustration and self-pity, is one of Rimbaud's most successful fictions," Robb comments, noting that the persistent downplaying of the man's actual achievements in Africa has many sources, including ignorance of the historical context, unreliable editions of the letters themselves (thanks to Paterne Berrichon and others), and, more than anything, the attitude "that abject misery is . . . the proper reward for someone who abandoned the profession to which his critics also belong." It comforts us to imagine the poet as a lousy businessman: dreamers should not be too conversant with the ways of the world.

Even Rimbaud's gun-running excursion to Shoa, generally thought to have been a spectacular failure (Steinmetz dismisses the whole enterprise as a "pipe dream"), looks upon closer examination to have netted him a fair profit, and to have opened a lucrative trade route into the bargain. The real irony of Rimbaud's time in Africa, in fact, is that the success of his endeavors hindered him from heading off to explore the world's "magnificent lands" as fully as he wanted—even as his wanderlust and his permanent need for flight frequently disrupted his more sedentary pursuits as a merchant.

WHAT BECOMES A legend most? For Robb, the answer apparently involves separating the myth from the sometimes prosaic reality, trimming the giant down to human proportions. Throughout his book, he maintains a note of wry intelligence, a respect for Rimbaud that refuses to become awe. There is an informed irreverence in these pages; more than any previous book on Rimbaud, this one has a tone that rings true to its subject. Robb's portrait ultimately, and perhaps inadvertently, chips away at the grandeur of his Rimbaud, but it is a picture that the puckish visionary would no doubt have appreciated. "The most effective 'key' to Rimbaud's universe is not a precise knowledge of mystical philosophies," he writes, "but a sense of humour."

The obverse side of this is that Robb's analysis of the works sometimes feels a bit slight. There is no dearth of information here, and Robb makes good use of his sources; but in his eagerness to demystify, he sometimes bypasses nuances that make the picture a little less neat, the argument a little less demonstrated. At times he seems to rely on no more than intuition, such as when he discards some "priggish phrases" attributed to Rimbaud on the grounds that "without the pious thought, the phrase has the rhythm and sentiments of the real Rimbaud. Otherwise, it sounds like his posthumous editor, Berrichon." The book is a deftly written, often brilliant performance; but now and again the deftness calls to mind a sleight of hand, and the brilliance looks more like flash.

In some ways, Steinmetz's book suffers from contradictory flaws. Where Robb occasionally borders on the merely clever, like a top student rehearsing an honors thesis, the professorial Steinmetz can overwhelm his reader with facts and their vicissitudes. Steinmetz, who has edited a three-volume edition of Rimbaud's complete writings, is clearly passionate about the poet's work, and his book displays a deep knowledge of, and a long meditation on, the texts. But sometimes this very familiarity can play him false. While he, like Robb, is eager to debunk the myth of Rimbaud, in some ways he seems just as captivated by it as his predecessors: this Rimbaud still wears many of the laurels deposited on him by decades of academic canonization, and his place in the pantheon emerges unchallenged. Steinmetz might recognize the importance of Rimbaud's time in Africa, but he is clearly more taken with the poet than with the trader. "How far he is from 'real life'!" he says of Rimbaud plotting his mercantile schemes in Harar, as if the works and days of the Paris café aesthetes that he had left behind were more authentic.

The underlying assumption is that there would be no biography of Rimbaud if his literary preeminence were not a given. To be sure, Rimbaud's writings live on in a way that his later adventures might otherwise not; but what if he had simply retired to a quiet poetic dotage in Roche? Robb, for whom Rimbaud the life-artist stands on an equal footing with Rimbaud the poetry-artist (a hierarchy Rimbaud himself refused, at least in print), finds justification for his narrative just as much in the man's actions and in the mystery that he created around himself as in his literary production. Reading Robb's account, one cannot help wondering whether Rimbaud would be as revered as he is today without the Paris escapades or the African exile, whether his poems would wield as much influence. No such question occurs while reading Steinmetz; indeed, it feels like sacrilege.

A CULTURAL DIFFERENCE? The French have long disparaged the "Anglo-Saxon" style of biography—often held to be disrespectful and gossipy—in favor of the more traditional, the more reticent, the more scholarly work-before-the-life variety. (This cultural divide is felt keenly in the thorny question of whether or not Rimbaud was involved in the African slave trade. Categorically not, say the French; to some extent, at least as an expedient, claim the English.) This is not to say that Steinmetz

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takes an indulgent or simplistic view of his subject. He is perfectly aware of the young poet's destructive selfishness and his "self-depravity." Like a protective parent, however, Steinmetz often finds ways of shifting the responsibility elsewhere. When Rimbaud persuades the weak-willed and infatuated Verlaine to abandon his young wife and newborn son more or less on a whim, it is the latter who is considered at fault, while Rimbaud, for all his manipulative cruelty, retains "a strange primitive purity."

In general, Steinmetz tends to wriggle away from Rimbaud's less flattering episodes by dismissing them as "gossip" and by concentrating instead on their underlying continuity: "It is less interesting to recount these anecdotes in great detail than to spot a form of character or resolution behind them.... It is more than certain that these numerous acts of bizarre, often ostentatious behavior corresponded to a much deeper intent for Rimbaud ... the affirmation of a lifestyle." At times, he even appears apologetic about the biographical enterprise in general: "Even if the facts of Rimbaud's life are regarded as being of negligible importance"—a curious supposition in this context—"his biography nonetheless harbors the awesome energy that animated [him]."

Like many who have built a career on a single writer's work, moreover, Steinmetz tends to take his facts for granted, "reminding" us of events rather than describing them. He can get mired in precious detail or in debates with himself over fine points, sometimes losing the thread of his story altogether. He drops names, many of them unfamiliar to modern readers. (Who today instinctively grasps what kind of anecdote is "worthy of Alphonse Allais"?). And his text, though generally lucid, is strewn with complicated paraphrases and obscure jokes. In many places Steinmetz is also poorly served by his translator, who lets the French original peek through behind the English, adding a dull patina to an all-too-often colorless text.

More than anything, Steinmetz's book differs from Robb's book in the underlying tone—a tone that, in Steinmetz's case, is more sober, and that arguably takes Rimbaud himself more seriously as a creative artist, but that, paradoxically enough, seems to hit just shy of the mark. Steinmetz writes like an academic, and he suffers from the academic's inability to stand far enough back from his subject, even to poke fun when necessary. If humor is a key to the proper understanding of Rimbaud, as Robb nicely suggests, then at least a portion of the poet's story has eluded Steinmetz.

Compare his highlighting of Rimbaud's revolutionary convictions as a bard of the Paris Commune in 1871 with Robb's more convincing view of Rimbaud using the revolution as fodder for his poetic apprenticeship: "To celebrate the spine-crushing, machine-gun-wielding hands of a female Communard (in '*Les Mains de Jeanne-Marie*') is not to declare one's voting intentions.... It looks more like an example of Rimbaud's search for loose structures and temporary commitments that could serve as a nomadic base for the imagination." Compare also Steinmetz bemoaning the possible disappearance of some prose poems intended for *Illuminations*—"the thought of such superb pages lost forever is maddening!"—with Robb discussing the Holy Grail of Rimbaud studies, the legendary (and quite possibly apocryphal) work *La Chasse spirituelle*:

> If the lost manuscript ever comes to light, it will break all auction records and probably fail to match the dream. For the time being, there is a small consolation in the fact that, in Verlaine's accounts, Rimbaud's best poems are always the poems that were lost. The fact that he was unable to remember a single word of *La Chasse spirituelle* (including the title) shows that, unlike the rest of Rimbaud's work, this ineffable masterpiece was perfectly forgettable.

Needless to say, there is a wide world between the hagiography and the hatchet job. If one mark of a successful biography is its impartiality, then both of these books, with all their differences in emphasis, hew close enough to the *juste milieu* to claim success. Both will reward the reader with an impressive array of information, some of it new, though little of it truly surprising. In the end it comes down to how you take your legends: straight, or with a grain of salt. It no doubt reflects my own cultural prejudice that I prefer Robb's slightly ironic take on Rimbaud, and that the flair with which he relates the man's life makes his book the more satisfying.

No rendering will ever fully capture Rimbaud's likeness, just as the few photographs taken of him famously look like portraits of different people, like "somebody else." But each of these books, in its way, focuses the lens more tightly, further clarifying our view—as much as such things can be clarified—of that ineffable and fascinating aura that always hovers just outside our field of vision. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

continued from page 4

his parents' two children, born so soon after their marriage that he was widely assumed to have been conceived before it.

HOWARD S. LEVENSON
Brookline, Massachusetts

Confidence man

TO THE EDITORS:

Robert M. Solow rates Alan Greenspan and Paul Volcker the two best Federal Reserve chairmen ever, but he also contends that Greenspan has received too much credit for the current economic expansion ("Giving Credit," February 5). Solow's argument is that the Fed's one policy instrument is too weak to account for the recent prosperity. He assesses Greenspan's greatest contribution as pragmatism, a willingness to keep interest rates low to enable maximum economic growth. An alternative view is that Volcker and Greenspan have created an era of exceptional confidence in central bankers as economic managers. Consumers' and investors' confidence produced the longest expansion in U.S. economic history. Furthermore, since Greenspan seemed ably to manage past crises, they likely will have confidence that his reductions in interest rates in January 2001 will work as well. Pragmatist or confidence man? If Greenspan is right about rising productivity as the basis for the current expansion, later generations may view him as the George Washington of the American economy. If the current expansion derives from mountains of debt and a stock market bubble, later generations may view him as the Charles Ponzi of central banking.

THOMAS F. HOGARTY
Adjunct Professor of Economics
Virginia Polytechnic Institute
Falls Church, Virginia

ROBERT M. SOLOW REPLIES:

Talking about "confidence" and "credibility" in central banking is everybody's favorite indoor sport. Confidence obviously matters, and it is just as obviously unmeasurable. So it can explain anything. If the economy prospers, consumers and investors have confidence in Alan Greenspan. If the economy flops, well, they lost confidence in Alan Greenspan. I gave him credit for not choking off expansion after 1994 even though the conventional belief at the time was that one more drop in unemployment would set off runaway inflation. Instead we've had five very good years. Thomas F. Hogarty should only have such a monument. ■

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Street Sign

MY KIDS ATTEND PUBLIC school in the suburbs, so, like any other parent, I cringed upon hearing about the two high school murders last week in Santee, California. But though school shootings are a shock and an outrage, I don't stay up at night worried that they endanger my kids: Overall, school violence has been declining for a decade, and homicide by adolescents has been falling for nearly as long. When I worry about my kids' safety, I think about far more likely threats: drugs, driving young—or getting hit by a car while crossing the street.

IN 1999, THE YEAR OF THE COLUMbine massacre, 28 students nationwide were killed in schools, while 840 kids under age 20 were killed when struck by cars as they walked, often to school. But, although school shootings spark a national outcry and huge government spending, street-crossing deaths draw no notice and no action. Pedestrian deaths are deemed, well, pedestrian.

FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS MONTGOMery County, Maryland, the Washington suburb where I live, has seen more pedestrians killed by cars than homicides. Nationally, cars and trucks kill about 5,000 American pedestrians per year—about one-quarter the number of murders. Pedestrian deaths, though not intentional, have much in common with homicides: An innocent person is suddenly cut down by someone wielding a dangerous weapon. But, while Americans devote enormous attention to murder (as we should), our 5,000 dead pedestrians largely escape public consciousness. And government consciousness: The Surface Transportation Policy Project, a nonpartisan group, estimates that the government spends roughly 150 times as much on highways as on pedestrian safety.

COULD IT BE THAT WE HEAR SO LITtle about pedestrian deaths because many of the victims are poor or immigrants? In the "safe" suburbs—where pedestrian deaths increasingly occur—the affluent typically move exclusively in cars, and the only ones trying to cross busy streets are students or the poor. In Fairfax County, Virginia, another Washington suburb, 23 percent of pedestrians killed between 1993 and 1998 were Hispanics, though Hispanics constituted just eight percent of the county's population. Studies in California and other states have also shown that pedestrian deaths occur disproportionately among Hispanics and the poor.

ANOTHER REASON WE IGNORE THESE deaths is that it's easy to blame the victim. Two-thirds of pedestrian fatalities happen in darkness, and those struck are often wearing dark garments. Many others occur when someone tries to dash across a busy boulevard rather than cross at a traffic light. Dashing across is a particular problem among immigrants, who often come from small villages where everyone dashes across the street but where there aren't anywhere near as many vehicles moving anywhere near as fast.

BUT PEDESTRIAN DEATHS AREN'T mostly the fault of pedestrians; they're mostly the fault of drivers. One major factor is speed. According to a Department of Transportation study, raising average traffic speed limits from 35 miles per hour to 45 miles per hour doubled the pedestrian death rate. As anyone who regularly drives in the suburbs knows, traffic increasingly moves at breakneck speed even on residential streets, partly because traffic backups cause frustrated drivers to nail the throttle whenever the road is clear and partly because those enormous SUVs make people feel invincible. So even if you're wearing hot pink and dutifully cross at a stoplight, you're still taking your life into your hands.

MY LOCAL MENACE IS MONTGOMERY County's eight-lane, car-clogged Rockville Pike, which bisects a ten-mile shopping colossus. It contains lengthy stretches where no one can cross safely because continuous torrents of priority-left or right-on-red traffic are surging into the crosswalk even when the "walk" light is illuminated. One person was killed this year at the intersection of Rockville Pike and Tuckerman Lane. The victim had been crossing with the right-of-way and was mowed down by a driver madly gunning to beat the light.

AS EVER MORE DRIVERS GUN EVERhigher-horsepower engines, this sort of thing is likely to happen more. *Everyone* enrolled at Seven Locks Elementary, the wonderful neighborhood school that two of my children attend, is classified by the county as a bus kid—even those who live within view of the school—because it is so dangerous to cross the suburban boulevard near the school. Placing a crossing guard at the intersection would be cheaper than busing everyone, but the county won't do it, reasoning that, with so many suburbanites speeding in SUVs while yakking on the phone, even the guard wouldn't be safe.

THREATS TO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY DO not just imperil school kids, the poor, and immigrants. They diminish a sense of community: Adults can't go on strolls and kids can't walk to school because people become predatory behind the wheel. And not being able to walk is also, not surprisingly, bad for public health: Studies show that during the last generation the trend line for obesity has risen at almost exactly the same rate that the trend line for "percentage of trips made on foot" has gone down. Still, the car-commuter lobby is so strong that many local governments don't even try to restrain speeding and hostile driving. Pedestrian deaths have been much discussed in Montgomery County political circles in recent years, and so far the county council and police are planning to do . . . nothing.

NATIONAL POLICYMAKERS ENDLESSLY focus on new safety devices for drivers and passengers. But, measured by collision deaths per mile traveled, it is 36 times more dangerous to walk than to be in a car, according to the Surface Transportation Policy Project. What about heading off pedestrian deaths? Intersections can be engineered to make walking safer; speed bumps and traffic circles can force traffic to slow down. Local governments can increase fines for violating pedestrians' right-of-way and make it more likely that killing a pedestrian will result in a charge of manslaughter, bringing this offense in line with most unintentional killing with a weapon. (Amazingly, in many cases there is no legal penalty at all for running someone down.)

AND WHY CONFINE TECHNOLOGICAL advances to the people *inside* cars? Standard traffic-light design could be reengineered so that when someone pushed the "walk" button at an intersection, it would cause a distinctive signal—let's say, a rotating blue strobe atop the stoplight. This would tell drivers there was a pedestrian about to cross, something they don't know now. That night at Rockville Pike and Tuckerman Lane, the driver of the car that killed the pedestrian might have responded differently if a prominent flashing light had warned there was someone on foot directly ahead. We'll never stop the random homicides by people who go berserk. We could stop most pedestrian deaths if only we tried.

GREGG EASTERBROOK

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Milwaukee City Council President Marvin Pratt, left, and Professor Howard Fuller, President, BAEO Board of Directors

The New Education Agenda for Black Children: Parental Choice

Parents need more educational options for their children. That simple message dominated a four-day conference in Milwaukee earlier this month.

The occasion was the third annual Symposium on Educational Options for African Americans. More than 700 delegates, from 35 states, attended. The diverse group included elected officials, educators, parents, religious leaders, and community activists.

The Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO) sponsored the conference.

In welcoming delegates, Milwaukee City Council President Marvin Pratt stressed the conference theme, "The New Education Agenda for Black Children: Parental Choice."

"We are on the verge of new and exciting educational reforms. Your presence here is a reminder of the dedication and urgency all of us in the movement have for bettering educational choices for our youth." Alderman Pratt added, "While we have not yet realized the vision of equal opportunity shared by African-American educators like Booker T. Washington...with your continuing commitment and dedication, we will."

Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist, a leader for two decades in the parental school choice movement, joined Alderman Pratt in addressing the conference delegates.

Mayor Norquist and Alderman Pratt are part of a broad coalition whose efforts have made Milwaukee a model for programs that expand the educational options of parents. The city has a range of innovative charter schools. It is home to America's largest and oldest voucher program for low-income students. One of the nation's oldest and largest privately-funded voucher programs also is based in Milwaukee. The Milwaukee Public Schools have become a major member of this coalition. Its elected and appointed officials give high priority to parent satisfaction and expanded choice.

Parental school choice is widespread — unless you're poor.

Delegates at this month's BAEO conference are forming BAEO chapters in their own communities. These chapters will support a wide array of parental choice programs, including charter schools, vouchers for low-income parents, tuition tax credits, public-private partnerships, privately financed scholarships, supplementary education programs, and home schooling.

baeo

Black Alliance for Educational Options

For more information go to: www.schoolchoiceinfo.org

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